

# **Pentecostal preaching and Christology:**

## **An empirical study**

By

**MOTSEPE LAWRENCE MOGOANE**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

degree of

**PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR**

At the

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

**SUPERVISOR: Prof Malan Nel**

**CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof Y. Dreyer**

**2022**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the following for the part they played in making this study a success:

- My supervisors, Prof Malan Nel and Prof Yolanda Dreyer for their friendliness, patience, support, encouragement and constructive criticism.
- The Western Reef Regional Council Committee for permitting me to conduct this research in the region.
- All the Assemblies of God (Back to God) churches, their leaders, as well as all the congregants who participated in this study.
- All pastors whose sermons were analysed and those who participated in the interviews.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, *Pentecostal preaching and Christology: an empirical study* is my work. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged employing complete references.



---

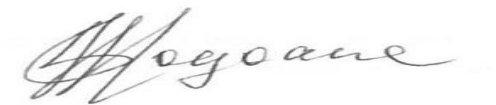
**SIGNATURE**  
**(M.L. MOGOANE)**

**29-09-2022**  
**DATE**

## ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained the required research ethics approval for the research described in this work. The author declares that he has observed the code of ethics for scholarly activities and has in general observed the principles of honesty and fairness in giving credit and appropriate acknowledgement to the work of others.

Signed



MOTSEPE LAWRENCE MOGOANE



## ABSTRACT

*Pentecostal preaching and Christology: an empirical study* is a qualitative study conducted in the Western Reef Region of the Assemblies of God (Back to God) church. The study seeks to answer the question: *How is Christology as a doctrinal element manifested and treated in contemporary preaching of Pentecostal churches in the Western Reef Region?*

The rationale behind this study is that while there has been wide research about preaching in various settings and times, not much has been written about preaching and Christology in the Pentecostal churches of the AOG (BTG), especially in the Western Reef Region.

The theoretical framework of the study is Richard Osmer's four core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation, namely, the Descriptive task, the interpretive task, the normative task and the Pragmatic task. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 entail a literature study and they discuss Pentecostalism, preaching and Christology respectively, while Chapter 5 is empirical work.

Data collection was done through ten sermons, and qualitative semi-structured interviews with five of the preachers whose sermons were analysed. Data was presented in narrative form and the 'emic' view of the participants. Data analysis was done through Atlas.ti computer software. Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data from the semi-structured interviews followed the thematic structure of the focus group interview schedule.

The study revealed that the participants understood what Pentecostalism is. They also knew what preaching entails, its fundamental components, as well as the differences between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church traditions. Furthermore, the study revealed that while interviewees had a fair understanding of Christology, they felt that it was not sufficiently expressed in the churches of the Western Reef Region. Interviewees also felt that preaching in the Western Reef Region was not at a satisfactory level, mainly due to the lack of theological training for pastors.

Participants indicated that the pragmatic way forward for the improvement of preaching in the region should be pre-ministerial theological training, which has to be

taken as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, interviewees suggested that there should be ongoing workshops for practicing ministers.

**KEY WORDS:** Christology, church, congregation, Pentecostalism, preacher, preaching, sermon.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AICs	African Independent/ Initiated Churches
AOG	Assemblies of God
BTG	Back to God
BTG (TT)	Back to God (Teaching Team)
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
FGBMFI	Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International
FGC	Full Gospel Church
KICC	Kingsway International Christian Centre
NKJV	New King James Version
NPC	New Pentecostal Churches
NT	New Testament
OMC	Ordained Ministers Council
OT	Old Testament
PT	Practical Theology
WRR	Western Reef Region
WRRCC	Western Reef Regional Council Committee

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1:	Imageries and designations used to describe Jesus	168
Table 5.1:	Sermons: Themes, types and texts	180
Table 5.2:	Themes and sub-themes from analysis of sermons	185
Table 5.3	Themes and sub-themes from qualitative semi-structured interviews	197

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b>
Acknowledgements	ii
Declaration	iii
Ethics statement	iv
Abstract	v
List of abbreviations and acronyms	vii
List of tables	viii
Table of contents	ix
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background information	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Rationale for the study	2
1.4 Purpose of the study	3
1.4.1 Aim	3
1.4.2 Objectives	3
1.5 Research questions	3
1.5.1 Main research question	3
1.5.2 Sub-questions of the Study	4
1.6 Definition of concepts	4
1.7 Relevance of the study to Practical Theology	8
1.7.1 Approaches to Practical Theology	8
1.7.2 Don Browning's approach to Practical Theology	12
1.8 Richard Osmer's hermeneutical approach to Practical Theology	13
1.8.1 Paradigms of Practical Theology at the level of pastoral and ecclesial practice	14
1.8.2 Paradigms of Practical Theology at the meta-theoretical level of theory-construction in academic Practical Theology	16
1.9 Research methodology	20
1.9.1 Research setting	20
1.9.2 Research design	20

1.9.3	Data collection and analysis	20
1.9.4	Interpretation of data	22
1.10	Ethical considerations	22
1.11	Delineation of the study	22
1.12	Outline of the study	22
<b>CHAPTER 2:</b>	<b>PENTECOSTALISM</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1	Introduction	24
2.2	The definition, origin and development of Pentecostalism	26
2.2.1	Defining Pentecostalism	26
2.2.2	The origins and development of Pentecostalism	30
2.3	African Pentecostalism	32
2.3.1	Development of African Pentecostalism	33
2.3.2	Pentecostalism in South Africa	36
2.3.2.1	The Apostolic Faith Mission	37
2.3.2.2	The Full Gospel Church.	38
2.3.2.3	The Assemblies of God	39
2.3.2.4	Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in South Africa	43
2.4	Biases in Pentecostal history	43
2.5	The Pentecostal worldview and participation in socio-political activities	45
2.5.1	The Pentecostal worldview.	45
2.5.2	Pentecostals and political engagement	47
2.6	Doctrinal tenets, rituals and practices of Pentecostal Belief	49
2.7	The Pentecostal hermeneutic	55
2.8	The role of women in Pentecostal worship	60
2.9	The economic message of Pentecostals and the prosperity gospel	63
2.9.1	The economic message of the Pentecostals	63
2.9.2	The prosperity gospel	64
2.10	Strengths of, and challenges facing Pentecostalism	68
2.10.1	Strengths of Pentecostalism	68
2.10.2	Challenges facing Pentecostalism	71

2.11	Summary	72
<b>CHAPTER 3: PREACHING</b>		<b>74</b>
3.1	Introduction	74
3.2	The concept of preaching	75
3.2.1	Different views of the preaching event	80
3.2.2	Approaches to preaching	83
3.2.3	Forms of preaching	86
3.3	Important elements of preaching	91
3.3.1	The preacher: Tom Long's metaphors of the preacher	91
3.3.1.1	The preacher as a herald	91
3.3.1.2	The preacher as a pastor	94
3.3.1.3	The preacher as a storyteller	96
3.3.1.4	The preacher as a witness	97
3.3.1.5	Preaching as a bearing testimony	98
3.3.1.6	Other metaphors of the preacher	99
3.3.2	The sermon	102
3.3.2.1	Sermon content	102
3.3.2.2	Types of sermons	103
3.3.3	The Scripture	107
3.3.3.1	The use of Scripture in contemporary preaching	107
3.3.3.2	The authority of the Bible	109
3.3.3.3	The centrality of Scripture in preaching	110
3.3.4	The congregation	110
3.4	Pentecostal preaching	114
3.4.1	Proclamation and manifestation in Pentecostal worship	117
3.4.2	General characteristics of Pentecostal preaching	119
3.5	Preaching in the African context	120
3.5.1	The message in the African pulpit	122
3.5.2	The challenges facing the African preacher's preparation of a sermon	123
3.5.3	Lessons to be learnt from the history of preaching in Africa	123
3.6	The preaching of Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu	124

3.6.1	Nicholas Bhengu's three theological schools of thought	124
3.6.2	Characteristics of Bhengu's teaching and preaching	126
3.7	Summary	127
<b>CHAPTER 4: CHRISTOLOGY</b>		<b>128</b>
4.1	Introduction	128
4.2	Views on the origins of Jesus as Messiah	131
4.3	Christological controversies	132
4.3.1	Arianism	133
4.3.2	Apollinarianism	133
4.3.3	Nestorianism	134
4.4	Development of Christology from the New Testament, Patristic, Medieval and Reformation periods and beyond	135
4.4.1	The New Testament interpretations of Christ	136
4.4.2	Development of Modern Christologies in the Patristic period	137
4.4.3	Response of contemporary Christians to the teachings of the Councils	139
4.4.4	Medieval, Reformation and Modern Christologies	140
4.4.5	Contemporary Christologies	140
4.5	Pentecostal Christology	144
4.5.1	Features of Classical Pentecostal Christology	144
4.5.2	Pentecostal Christology and ecumenical theologies	145
4.5.2.1	Functional Christology	146
4.5.2.2	Christology "from above" versus Christology "from below"	147
4.5.2.3	Spirit Christology	148
4.6	African Christology	152
4.6.1	Soteriological perspectives of African Christology	155
4.6.2	Sources of African Christology	156
4.7	Christology of the New Testament	156
4.7.1	Christological titles and metaphors of the New Testament	158
4.7.2	Designations and symbols used for Jesus in Revelation	168
4.7.3	The Lamb Christology in Revelation 5	170



4.8	The concept of the Messiah in the Old Testament	171
4.8.1	Christocentricity as an exegetical approach to the Old Testament	173
4.8.2	Preaching Christ from the Old Testament by New Testament writers	173
4.8.3	Problems regarding interpreting Christ from the Old Testament	177
4.9	Summary	177
<b>CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL DATA: SERMONS AND INTERVIEWS</b>		<b>179</b>
5.1	Introduction	179
5.2	Sermons	180
5.2.1	Type of sermons and their themes	180
5.2.2	Styles of preaching	182
5.2.3	Congregational participation	184
5.2.4	Sermon contents	185
5.2.4.1	Abiding in Jesus	186
5.2.4.2	Agape love	187
5.2.4.3	Prayer	187
5.2.4.4	The character of God	188
5.2.4.5	The character of Jesus	189
5.2.4.6	The resurrection of Jesus	195
5.3	Semi-structured interviews	196
5.3.1	Preaching	198
5.3.1.1	Preaching: Analysis and presentation	198
5.3.1.2	Preaching: Interpretation and discussion of the findings	203
5.3.2	Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching	204
5.3.2.1	Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching: Analysis and presentation	204
5.3.2.2	Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching: Interpretation and discussion of the findings	209
5.3.3	Christology	211
5.3.3.1	Christology: Presentation and analysis	211
5.3.3.2	Christology: Interpretation and discussion of the findings	216

5.3.4	State of preaching in churches of the Western Reef Region	217
5.3.4.1	State of preaching in churches of the Western Reef Region: Analysis and presentation	218
5.3.4.2	State of Preaching in the Western Reef Region: Interpretation and discussion of the findings	220
5.3.5	Improving preaching in the Western Reef Region	221
5.3.5.1	Improving preaching in the Western Reef Region: Analysis and presentation	221
5.3.5.2	Improving preaching in the Western Reef Region: Interpretation and discussion of the findings	223
5.4	Review of the appropriateness of Richard Osmer's four core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation	224
5.4.1	The Descriptive Empirical Task of Practical Theological Interpretation	224
5.4.2	The Interpretive Task of Practical Theological Interpretation	226
5.4.3	The Normative Task of Practical Theological Interpretation	226
5.4.4	The Pragmatic Task of Practical Theological Interpretation	228
5.5	Summary	229

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS**

	<b>FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	230
6.1	Introduction	230
6.2	Summaries and conclusions	230
6.2.1	Pentecostalism and other church traditions	230
6.2.2	Understanding the notion of preaching	231
6.2.3	Differences between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church traditions	231
6.2.4	Understanding the concept of Christology	232
6.2.5	Factors affecting preaching in the Western Reef	233
6.2.6	State of preaching in the Western Reef Region	234

6.2.7	Improving preaching in the Western Reef	234
6.3	Recommendations	234
6.4	Implications for future research	235
6.5	Limitations of the study	235
6.6	Summary	236
<b>7.</b>	<b>LIST OF SOURCES</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>256</b>
8.1	Appendix 1: request for permission to do research (To Regional Council Committee)	256
8.2	Appendix 2: Request for permission to do research (To local churches)	257
8.3	Appendix 3: Letter of informed consent for participation in academic research (Sermon observation /Sermon analysis)	258
8.4	Appendix 4: Letter of informed consent for participation in academic research (interview)	260
8.5	Appendix 5: Letter of permission to do research (From Western Reef Regional Council Committee)	262
8.6	Appendix 6: Interview schedule for semi-structured interviews	263
8.7	Appendix 7: Observation sheet for sermon preaching	264

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Preaching is an important part of congregational worship, and it happens in various church denominations and traditions globally. Hence, through the years there has been vast literature on this phenomenon. For instance, in tracing developments of preaching in a period of just over twenty years from 1962 to 1983, Long (2005c:11-16) explored four pertinent key elements, namely, the Bible, the congregation, the preacher and the sermon. These elements will be discussed in detail in the chapter on preaching.

First, concerning the Bible, Goldsworthy (2000:11-21) mentions the importance of the Bible (as the word of God) in preaching. Second, when exploring preaching from a congregational point of view, Kurewa (2000:83-85) mentions two factors that relate to the congregation and situation-centred preaching, which are Kerygma (proclamation) and Didache (teaching). The third key element is the preacher. While much will still be written about the preacher in this study, Swears (2000:37-58), emphasises the three character traits of the preacher, that is, integrity, authenticity and authority. The fourth key element is the sermon, of which various aspects will be explored in this study, *inter alia*, its definition, preparation and steps followed in sermon preaching as shown by among others Kurewa (2000:75-85) and Goldsworthy (2000:127).

This research is about Pentecostal preaching in the Western Reef Region of the Assemblies of God (Back to God). As a member of the aforementioned church for about thirty years, the researcher has been exposed to different approaches to preaching in this church. However, the researcher feels there has not been sufficient research on preaching and Christology in this church. Limited research is available about other aspects of this church, such as the works by and Mbamalu (2002) and Lephoko (2005), regarding the history of the Assemblies of God (Back to God) [AOG (BTG)] and the work of its founder, Rev NBH Bhengu respectively.

Furthermore, preaching happens in various church traditions, such as the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, the Pentecostal and the Charismatic/Neo-Pentecostal traditions. While this study will allude to these various traditions at some points, its focus is on the Pentecostal tradition.

Another element of importance in this exploration of Pentecostal preaching is Christology. The rationale for the inclusion of Christology in this study is not only that it is part of Systematic Theology, but also because it is one of the fundamentals of Pentecostal theology. This study deems it important that while Christo-centricity is an indispensable part of Pentecostal preaching, what is being preached about Jesus as the Christ is worthy of investigation.

This is a qualitative cross-sectional study, which does not aim to generalise its findings.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Nel (2017:285-286) posits that from the earliest days of the Pentecostal movement preaching had an important function of explaining through the Bible, what God still wants to do for people. That is, to touch them with his Spirit of power. However, Pentecostals changed this form of preaching, (which they inherited from the Reformation and is generally used by evangelicals), from an orderly discourse and reasoned exposition of biblical passages into a chaotic phenomenon which seems to be all style and little substance. The researcher agrees with Nel and has noticed that this manifests in a departure from Christocentric and Bible-based preaching to the type of preaching which is replete with heresy and showmanship. This poses challenges also within the Assemblies of God (Back to God) as a Pentecostal church. For instance, the researcher attended one of the pastors' fellowship meetings in Gauteng where ministers from about a hundred churches discussed the dangers of the prosperity gospel (as manifested in contemporary Pentecostal preaching), and how to avoid being entangled therein.

The researcher believes that there is a link between the contents of preaching and the congregational practice of various churches. Hence, this study aims to explore the preaching phenomenon, together with its inherent characteristic of Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region of the AOG (BTG).

## **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

While there has been wide research about preaching in various settings and times as shown in writings of scholars such as Kurewa (2000:75-173), Long (2005a),

Brueggemann (2005:17-29) and Pleizier (2010:32-165), not much has been written about preaching the Pentecostal churches of the AOG (BTG), especially in the Western Reef Region.

The researcher's interest in this topic was motivated by the desire to contribute to research regarding AOG (BTG) preaching and Christology, with the hope that more studies regarding these phenomena will be carried out on a larger scale. It is also hoped that this research will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the preaching practice in the churches of the Western Reef Region of the Assemblies of God (BTG). This study will also make recommendations where necessary, which will hopefully improve the preaching practice as it currently pertains.

## **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.4.1 Aim**

To explore the preaching phenomenon, together with its inherent characteristic of Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region of the AOG (BTG).

### **1.4.2 Objectives**

1. To analyse the fundamental components of the preaching of Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region.
2. To explore how, and to what extent Christology manifests itself in the preaching of Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region.
3. To find out the factors affecting the preaching of Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region.
4. To explore the current state of preaching in the churches of the Western Reef Region.
5. To suggest ways of improving the practice of preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1 Main Research Question**

How is Christology as a doctrinal element manifested and treated in contemporary preaching of Pentecostal churches in the Western Reef Region?

### **1.5.2 Sub-questions of the Study**

1. What are the fundamental elements of preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region as it happens currently?
2. How, and to what extent does Christology find expression in the preaching of Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region?
3. What are the factors affecting the preaching of Pentecostal churches in the Western Reef Region?
4. What is the current state of preaching in the churches of the Western Reef Region?
5. How could preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region be improved?

### **1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

#### **Christology**

According to McMahon (2013:13-14), in the past, Christology was a rather straightforward theological discipline. It investigated how God became human in Christ, what powers Christ had, and how the death and resurrection of Christ saved humanity. Christology can therefore be referred to as a critical reflection on the religious significance of Jesus, or the Christian doctrine of the person of Christ. The classical Christian account of the significance of Jesus of Nazareth is framed in terms of the concept of the 'incarnation' and the doctrine of the 'two natures' of Christ – divine and human.

Etymologically, Christology is from the Greek words Christos (Christ) + logos (word/speech). Therefore, in simple terms, Christology refers to the scientific study of the person of Jesus Christ, especially regarding who he is and what he did/does (Robinson 2004:284-288).

There are two approaches used to study Christology, which will be employed in this study. The first starts from the creedal formulations confessing Christ as the "true God" and "true man" as embodied in the Nicene and Chalcedon creeds. This methodology, termed Christology "from above", then works backwards to the Christology of the early Church and the New Testament (NT). The second approach is Christology "from below". It begins with the factual historical records and theological data as entailed in the NT and then traces the developments of the Church's understanding of Jesus

Christ before the creeds (Robinson 2004:284-288). However, this study will adopt the general meaning of Christology as the scientific study of the person, and work of Jesus Christ and especially the mystery of the union in him, of the divine and human natures.

## **Church**

The term “church” in the New Testament (NT), is from the Greek word “*ekklesia*” and refers to any assembly or local body of believers, or the universal body of believers. (Moore 2004:295-297). The word “church” means the visible community in which Christians come together for worship, prayer, communal sharing, instruction, reflection and mission. Therefore, the church can be viewed not only as one of the social institutions but also as a shared form of life shaped by profound theological self-understandings (Scott 2017:33). The church can be explained in terms of its essence and its form. The essence of the church is expressed by its permanent or unchanging factors, that is, the people of God as “the one and only dwelling place of God”, which occurs through the Holy Spirit. The form of the church is understood by means of the changing and reformable factors and images of the church throughout its history (Scott 2017:35). This research will adopt the two meanings mentioned above. In this study, the word ‘Church’ will be used for the universal body of Christian believers, while ‘church’ will apply to the local church or a denomination, such as the Assemblies of God.

Writing from a Pentecostal perspective, Alvarado (2012:137-138) states: “The Church is principally a worshipping community that mirrors the over- arching kingdom of God in an earthly expression ... it is a community of persons who have been called out and called together as the people of the Lord”. In their lives, these people show forth their allegiance and fidelity to their Sovereign Lord, to continue God’s plan for the earth, by drawing people unto him, and for his purposes and glory. The Old Testament (OT) uses terminology that indicates that Israel was ‘the people of God’. In the NT, the Apostle Paul borrows this terminology to describe the Church (2 Corinthians 6:16). In addition, the Apostle Peter, in (1 Peter 2:9-10), characterises the church as ‘the people of God’. The Church, as a people of God, is the focal point of the biblical narrative.

## **Exegesis**

From the perspective of the liberation theologian J. Severino Croato, the word *exegesis* originates from *ex* (meaning out) and *hegeisthai*, which means, “to lead” or



“to guide” and it has a sense of emerging from the text with a pure meaning gathered from within the text. This can be contrasted with *eisegesis*, which implies getting into the text with questions that are not always those of its author and getting into the text from a different horizon experience from that of the author (cf. Long 2005c:39). Exegesis is a formal analysis of the passage to uncover what the author was saying, and it takes into consideration the literary characteristics of the text, its linguistics and *genre*, as well as its historical and theological contexts (Goldsworthy 2000:127).

## **Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics is said to be as old as ancient Greece, and etymologically, it can be traced back to Hermes, the Greek messenger god. However, in the course of centuries of its development, the term was employed for purposes such as the rabbinical interpretations of the Torah and biblical exegesis. During the Reformation, it was used for addressing theological controversies and consequently, its use was extended to biblical exegesis and commentary. Although the term is now defined much more broadly, to some extent the theological meaning of hermeneutics continues to persist. Hence some define hermeneutics as “the art or science of interpretation, especially of Scripture”. However, despite this popular notion of hermeneutics during most of its history, hermeneutics has been much more than merely a theological enterprise. Other variants of hermeneutics like juridical hermeneutics and philological hermeneutics have appeared (Prasad 2002:14).

In this study, hermeneutics will be understood as a science that is fundamentally concerned with the understanding of the ancient text in such a way that it becomes an existential event for its listeners or readers (Van Eck & Kok 2011:83). In this way, the meaning of the text becomes historical, and not just inherent to the text (Jones 1999:172). That is, hermeneutics aims at uncovering the links between the ancient text and the contemporary hearer/reader of that text (Goldsworthy 2000:127).

## **Homiletics**

The term *homiletics* is from the Greek word *homilia*, and it means discourse or sermon, which is more than the act of preaching. It is the science and skills of effective proclamation (Kurewa 2000:75). According to Pepler (n.d.:1-2), like many other Christian disciplines, homiletics is hard to define adequately. While it is commonly

defined as the art of preaching, some expand this definition to the art of preparing and delivering sermons. In essence, homiletics is the study and practice of the preaching of the word of God.

## **Pentecostalism**

Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:1-2) describes Pentecostalism as the most globalised form of pneumatic Christianity, that belongs to a larger family of Protestant churches. It shares the traditional evangelical theological emphases on the authority of the Bible, the centrality of the cross, regeneration as a way to Christian salvation, and a call to holiness as the outflow of a new relationship with Christ. Pneumatic Christianity refers to any form of Christianity that values, affirms and consciously promotes the experiences of the Spirit as part of formal Christian life and worship. Pneumatic Christian churches include the many indigenous expressions of Christianity in non-Western contexts, privileging the experiences of the Spirit, even if they do not call themselves Pentecostal.

Although Migwi (2016:14-16), mentions that there are three broad categories of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Kenya, namely, Classical, Independent and Charismatic/Neo-Pentecostal, the researcher believes that these categories also apply in the South African context. This study focuses on Classical Pentecostal Churches, which are churches linked to early American and European Pentecostal churches, emphasising faith healing, prophecy, exorcism, speaking in tongues as evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit, spontaneous prayer, exuberant liturgical expressions as well as an emphasis on dreams and visions. Such churches include Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Full Gospel Church, Assemblies of God, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of God.

In this study, Pentecostal churches refer to pneumatic Christian churches, which ascribe to Pentecostalism of Western origins, including churches affiliated to Assemblies of God (Back to God).

## **Preaching**

Farley (2005:66) states that preaching is an orally delivered message in a liturgical setting, which takes into consideration the situation of the congregation, its cultural setting and the problems of its members. It is by nature acoustical, having its home in

the orality, not textuality (Dykstra 2001:9). Preaching can be said to consist of two distinct but inseparable components, namely, the sermon and the message. A sermon is the packaging of the message. A message from God in the heart of the preacher requires him/her to prepare a sermon thereof. A sermon is a cultural packaging that serves a special purpose of communicating God's word to the people through the preacher. Therefore, the sermon is strained through the cultural context concerning, among other aspects, its length, language and the manner of its delivery (Kurewa 2000:172).

## **Sermon**

By its nature of being in the category of communication, a sermon is dynamic and therefore there are challenges in defining it. According to Martin Luther King Junior's assertion, a sermon is not an essay to read, but a discourse to be heard. A sermon is directed towards the listening ear rather than the reading eye. Therefore, a sermon can be said to be an oral communication of the gospel in the context of worship (cf. Kurewa 2000:172).

A sermon is not an act of reporting on an old text, but it is an act of making a new text visible and available. This new text consists of the old text and the imaginative construction of the preacher, manifesting now of utterance. It is a coming together of everything we know about our present world and everything we know about the ancient text, in a volatile and exciting imaginative encounter (Long 2005c: 39).

## **1.7 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY TO PRACTICAL THEOLOGY**

### **1.7.1 Approaches to Practical Theology**

Literature shows various approaches to Practical Theology (PT). This emanated from the decline of mainline Protestantism when church leaders, theologians, and theological educators engaged in conversation on a wide range of questions about the need for the revitalisation of the field of PT. The main concern was how Christians can live and witness their faith within a pluralistic society where Christianity was no longer presumed to be the only established religion (Cahalan 2005:86-87; Cahalan, Hess & Miller MacLemore 2008:35). For instance, Ballard (1992:28-29) mentions that the inherited protestant tradition as set out by Friedrich Schleiermacher, that PT mediates between critical/theoretical theology and practice is not sustainable because it

undermines the foundations of theology, since each field of theology is part of the practical demands for Christian understanding in contemporary society.

Cahalan (2005:86-87), describes three approaches to PT: First, the search for universal epistemological and moral reason. Second, the claims for Christian identity through the engagement of practice, and third, the search for just, authentic expressions of Christian life within particular local communities and contexts. While these approaches are distinctive, they have a great deal in common and share the following basic concerns: First, each is postmodern in the sense that they have stepped beyond the presuppositions of modernity, taking a critical stance on modernity. Second, the approaches share an interest in the everyday realities of the Christian life, and how it is lived and expressed with integrity in our time and place. Third, the approaches are communal in the sense that they pay attention to the local community, particularly the congregation as the primary locus of the church's ministry.

Ward (2017:2) writes about the move of PT away from the "clerical paradigm" (that is, the primary concern of training ministers), to a concern to develop a public form of theology that can speak beyond the church. However, he posits that there are problems with the wholesale rejection of ministry and the church as a context for PT. The key problem with the rejection of the clerical paradigm is that it leaves PT without a clear reference point in practice and the life of the church. Therefore, PT must cater for the training of ministers while being fully rooted in the everyday practice of the Christian faith in the church and the world. Consequently, Ward (2017:2-3) presents PT in a way of a ministerial and a missional dynamic. In this sense, the academic practice of theology is therefore located in relation to the ongoing life of the church.

Wepener, Dreyer & Meylahn (2017:137) who maintain that the point of departure in PT is the life of the congregation, support the approach above. That is, the approach to PT moves from the life of the congregation to theory and then back to congregational life (that is, from practice to theory and back to practice). Therefore, this approach can be seen as a spiralling movement between theory and practice with a focus on the improvement of the praxis. Wepener *et al* further assert that Practical Theology is not in contrast to theoretical theology but rather points towards a theological reflection on practice. In this sense then, Heitink (1999:6-8), is right to mention that PT is a theory of action, that is, an empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the

Christian faith in the praxis of modern society, focusing on God's action mediated through human action.

It was believed that a pastor would be ready to lead a congregation if he/she was equipped with the scientific theory of the classic theological disciplines such as Systematic Theology, history, and the Bible, being accompanied by a few aspects of liturgics and management. However, this approach faded in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the Church lost cultural relevance, and was faced with the challenge of pluralism, as well as the "theory-to-practice irrelevance." In the 1970s and 1980s scholars like Don Browning, James Fowler, Edward Farley and Thomas Groome sought to turn PT into one of the crucial disciplines in theology. These theologians argued that all theology needed to be practical and that congregations and other forms of lived practice are the very texts of practical theological reflection because they are places of embodied theology and practical wisdom (cf. Root 2014:21-22).

Don Browning's views on theology and his approach to PT are motivated by the need to answer the question: "In what ways do religious communities make sense or exhibit practical reason?" This question is prompted by the quest to understand religious communities, and the type of wisdom that they embody. Browning establishes his approach to fundamental PT on several philosophies such as Aristotle's practical wisdom/reason (*phronesis*), Gadamer's hermeneutical theory, Habermas's critical theory and congregational studies. Aristotle's *phronesis* refers to the use of reason to answer the questions what should we do? And how should we live? Gadamer's hermeneutical theory proposes that all understanding proceeds in a form of a dialogue or conversation (cf. Browning 1991:8-16).

Browning (1991:4) is of the view that the process of theological reflection unfolds in the following sequence: First, when we encounter a crisis, we begin to answer questions about our theory-laden practices. Second, we take time to describe our practices to understand the questions raised by the crisis. Third, we take our questions to our normative Christian texts and start a critical conversation between our practices and our traditions. Fourth, we develop, defend and deploy new interpretations of our normative texts, and consequently affect our tradition and practices. Hence, all theology should be conceived primarily as fundamental PT, having four specialities namely, Descriptive theology, Historical theology, Systematic Theology

and Strategic or fully Practical Theology. This view of theology differs from those of Gadamer, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth, who propose that theology primarily proceeds from theory to practice, while Browning's view is that theology proceeds from practice to theory and back to practice (cf. Browning 1991:7-8).

Descriptive theology entails the place of theology as part of the full task in the description of situations, just as is the case with other secular disciplines such as psychology, sociology, or anthropology (Browning 1991:42). It describes contemporary theory-laden practices and the related questions that generate all theological reflection (Browning 1991:47). It aims at making thick (in-depth) descriptions of situations, helping ministers to have a good grasp of the situations and questions about their congregations, and to be able to provide appropriate practical theological answers (Browning 1991:94-95).

According to Browning (1991:49), Historical theology engages with the question: "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible?" That is, in this step, practical theologians consider the questions raised by descriptive theology to the word of God and subsequently ask, as frankly and honestly as possible, what the Scriptures teach concerning those questions. In this step, biblical studies, church history and the history of Christian thought are important because they assist in understanding praxis and the theory behind it.

Systematic Theology, when viewed from Gadamer's hermeneutical perspective is the fusion of horizons between the vision implicit in contemporary practices and the vision implied in the practices of the normative Christian texts. That is, by fusing present practices with the normative texts, Systematic Theology tries to gain a comprehensive understanding of the present; and to examine the large, encompassing themes of the present practices and the vision inherent in them (Browning 1991:51). Two fundamental questions, one theological and the other apologetic guide Systematic Theology. First, the theological question wants to find out what new horizon of meaning is fused when questions from present practices are brought to the central Christian witness. The second question is apologetic because it is a quest to find the reasons that can be advanced to support the validity claims of this new fusion of meaning (Browning 1991:51-53).

Strategic Practical Theology refers to what is commonly known as the Church disciplines of religious education, pastoral care, preaching, liturgy and social ministries (Browning 1991:8). Strategic practical theological thinking is driven by four basic questions, which culminate in the theory of action: The first question is: “How do we understand concrete situations in which we must act?” This question does not only refer to the general features of the situation, but it also refers to the special histories, commitments and needs of the agents in the situation as well as the interplay of institutional systems and how they converge on the situation. The second question asked is: “What should be our praxis in this concrete situation?” This entails bringing forth the answers found in Descriptive Theology, Historical Theology and Systematic Theology to the analysis and action needed in the concrete situation. The third question is: “How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?” The fourth question is: What means and strategies should we use in this concrete situation? This question poses the issue of where people are and how various forms of ministry can begin the process of transformation.

### **1.7.2 How changes in practical theological approaches impact preaching**

The changing approaches to PT have influenced homiletics in general and preaching in particular. Practical Theology is the branch of theology that considers those actions designed to ensure that God’s word reaches people and is embodied in their lives. These actions include preaching, instruction, care, celebration and service. Since preaching is part of PT, it implies that the changes that happen in practical theological approaches will invariably affect it (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:1; cf. Michie 2004:2). For instance, Brueggemann (2005:17-29) sets forth sixteen theses, which suggest that evangelical preaching is now in a new cultural, epistemological context. Among these theses, he mentions practical theological issues that have impacted preaching such as: the inadequacy of historical-critical understanding of the biblical text as it has been conventionally practiced; pluralism as a perspective and orientation of the congregation; an awareness of the polyvalence of the biblical text; as well as the change in old modes of certitude resulting in the preaching of the biblical text no longer being an act of metaphysics, but an enactment of drama, in which the congregation can be both the audience and participants. This study is premised on the understanding that these changes affect preaching also in the Western Reef Region.



## 1.8 RICHARD OSMER'S HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH TO PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

The various approaches mentioned above are valid to some degree in the context of this study. However, in this study Richard Osmer's hermeneutical approach to Practical Theology is adopted as the practical theological framework. The rationale behind the choice of this approach is two-pronged: First, according to Pieterse (2017:37-42), Osmer's hermeneutical approach has a great influence on contemporary theologians, particularly in South Africa. Among these theologians are Schoeman of the Department of Practical Theology at the University of the Free State; Cas Wepener, Maake Masango and Johann Meylahn of the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria, as well as other theologians at Unisa. Second, the advantage of using Osmer's approach is that it bridges the sub-disciplines of academy and ministry and the interpretation of the interconnectedness of ministry.

The necessity that one's theological-theoretical framework (that carries one's assumptions for a study) should be stated is informed by the concern that due to a wide variety of approaches to research in Practical Theology, practical theologians do not always spell out their theological-theoretical framework that carries their assumptions when doing research. This lack of metatheoretical assumptions leaves readers in the dark, being unable to follow their research process. Therefore, practical theologians need to put their theological-theoretical framework in the research report. This is helpful not only to the reader but also in directing the research process and the evaluation of the findings (Pieterse 2010:105). This study finds it prudent to follow Pieterse's advice, and hence the adoption of Osmer's hermeneutical approach to Practical Theology as a basis for this research's theological assumptions and theoretical framework.

The section below discusses Richard Osmer's current international perspective of Practical Theology, which deals with paradigms of PT at two levels. The first level is that of pastoral and ecclesial practice, and the second entails paradigms of academic PT at the metatheoretical level of research theory construction.



### **1.8.1 Paradigms of Practical Theology at the level of pastoral and ecclesial practice**

This level entails reflective practice, where pastors and academics carry out the four core tasks of practical theological interpretation, namely, Descriptive-Empirical, Interpretive, Normative and Pragmatic tasks in particular contexts in a congregation. Pertinent to this, Osmer (2008:1-8) explores four questions that can guide our interpretation and response to situations that we encounter in a congregation. These questions are: First, what is going on? Second, why is this going on? Third, what ought to be going on? And fourth, how might we respond? These questions focus on the above-mentioned four core tasks of practical theological interpretation respectively. The relevance of these questions to this study, is that they assist the researcher to explore the current state of preaching and Christology in the Western Reef Region of the AOG(BTG); the causes of the current state of preaching; normative practices in homiletics; as well as the pragmatic way-forward to improve the current situation.

Osmer's framework is in a way corroborated by Don Browning's four steps of fundamental Practical Theology, as described in Section 1.7.1 above. According to Browning, for PT to be genuinely practical, it must have some description of the present situation, critical theory about the ideal situation, and some understanding of the processes, spiritual forces, and technologies required to get from where we are to the future ideal, even if that ideal cannot be realized completely (cf. Steyn & Masango 2011:4). These points corroborate Osmer's four tasks of practical theological interpretation in the sense that: 'Descriptions of the present situation' alludes to the Descriptive-Empirical task; 'critical theory about the ideal situation' refers to the Normative task. 'Understanding of the processes, spiritual forces, and technologies required to get from where we are to the future ideal' gives the idea of an interpretive task. Last, 'getting from where we are to the future ideal', implies a Pragmatic task.

#### **The Descriptive-empirical task (What is going on?)**

In the Descriptive-empirical task, information is gathered to better understand particular episodes, situations, or contexts. Such information may be about the congregation's culture, building a demographic profile of new members or families joining the church, or evaluating an adult education programme (Osmer 2008:4-6). In this study, the Descriptive-empirical task involves gathering information about

preaching and its Christological expression in the Pentecostal preaching of the churches of the Western Reef Region of the AOG (BTG).

Regarding the preaching phenomenon, the Descriptive-empirical task of practical theological interpretation involves, among other activities, congregational exegesis. Congregational exegesis entails the exploration of the context of the congregation. This is important in the sense that it exposes the preacher to the multidimensional reality of the members of the congregation and helps the preacher to be able to address the congregation with respect and understanding. In addition, when the preacher knows where the congregation is, concerning values and beliefs, he/she can bring a transformative theology to the congregation's existential situation (Tisdale 2008:75-76).

### **The Interpretive task (Why is this going on?)**

The Interpretive task of practical theological interpretation involves drawing on the theories of the arts and sciences, to better understand and explain why certain patterns and dynamics are happening in particular situations and contexts (Osmer 2008:4). In addition, crucial to the question 'why is this going on?' is the notion of wise judgment (prudence or practical wisdom). This is the capacity to interpret episodes, situations and contexts by recognising the relevant particulars of specific events and circumstances, discerning the moral ends at stake, and determining the most effective means to achieve these ends (Osmer 2008:84). This study will attempt to answer the question regarding why preaching happens as it does in the Western Reef Region, by exploring, *inter alia*, factors affecting preaching in the above-mentioned region.

### **The Normative task (What ought to be going on?)**

The Normative task is the heart of the specifically theological move in PT (Root 2014:25). In the Normative task of practical theological interpretation, theological concepts are used to interpret particular episodes, situations and contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses and learning from good practice (Osmer 2008:4).

In appropriating this task, this study will compare the preaching practice in the Western Reef Region to teachings of the Scripture, as well as to what literature in homiletical theory says about the subjects of preaching and Christology.

## **The Pragmatic task (How might we respond?)**

In the Pragmatic task, the pertinent question is ‘How might we respond?’ That is, after dealing with the first three questions, the Pragmatic task engages in forming an action plan and undertaking specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in desirable directions (Osmer 2011:2). In the Pragmatic task, there is a need for models of leading change. For leading change to happen, Osmer (2008:176-178) proposes the need for three types of leadership viz, task competence, transactional leadership and transforming leadership. Task competence refers to the ability to excel in performing leadership roles in an organisation. Transactional leadership is the ability to influence others through a process of trade-offs, reciprocity and mutual exchange. Transforming leadership is the process of leading an organisation through “deep change” in its identity, mission, culture and operating procedures.

Regarding the Pragmatic task, this study will put forth suggestions as to what could be done as a way of improving preaching and Christology in the Western Reef Region of the AOG (BTG). What happens thereafter will then depend on the leadership of the region and the whole AOG (BTG) church.

### **1.8.2 Paradigms of Practical Theology at the metatheoretical level of theory-construction in academic Practical Theology**

Meta-theoretical assumptions are a matrix of assumptions that a practical theologian carries beyond a single book or theory and lie at a higher level (Osmer 2011:3). According to Richard Osmer, human knowledge has developed in two complementary ways: On one hand, human beings have gathered and made use of knowledge to deal with problems and issues immediately before them. On the other hand, because they are aware of their activities as knowers, they have reflected on the frameworks that guide their knowing. This sort of reflection has its roots in the concept of paradigms as popularised by Thomas Kuhn in the 1960s. Although Kuhn was somewhat ambiguous in his definition of this concept of paradigms, he, however, used it to mean an interpretative model which encompasses several beliefs, values and techniques, shared by the members of a given community (cf. Osmer (2011:1).

The concept of paradigms arose from the South African philosophical theologian, Wentzel van Huyssteen’s concept of ‘reflective equilibrium’. Reflective equilibrium assumes that Practical Theology is highly pluralistic. It attempts to identify tasks or

elements that are held in common by different practical theologians, even as they are carried out in very different ways (Pieterse 2010:104; Osmer 2011:3).

At a metatheoretical level, practical theologians make decisions about how they view the theory–praxis relationship, interdisciplinary work, sources of justification (the relative weight of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience), and the theological rationale that justifies their approach to research projects (Osmer 2011:2). The section below discusses these concepts.

### **Theory and praxis relationship**

The theory-praxis relationship is at the centre of the discussion about the nature of Practical Theology. If, on one hand, theory takes precedence over, and is determinative of practice, then practice concentrates on methods, techniques and strategies for ministry. On the other hand, if the practice takes priority over theory, then ministry tends to be based on pragmatic results rather than prophetic revelation (Anderson 2001:14).

Theory-praxis relationship involves drawing on philosophy, social theory, and/or theology to make decisions about the nature of praxis or practice, and the theory's relationship to it (Osmer 2005:306). Theory-praxis relationship is the kernel of practical theological reasoning by which from a certain philosophical and theological background, a specific perspective is chosen on the reality of praxis and the relationship between theory and praxis, through which theories for praxis are developed (Pieterse 2010:104).

Pieterse (2010:106) argues that since the 1960s, there was a turn in the approach to Practical Theology, that praxis should be researched empirically. This implied that the focus changed from the old idea, that the movement in Practical Theology is from theory to practice (as an application of theory), to the question of the relationship between theory and praxis. Theory, in a practical theological sense, represents the coherent structure of normative pronouncements rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ and its theological tradition. In addition, theory is related to the current church praxis and the current situation of society. On the other hand, praxis in a practical theological sense is church praxis, that is, the actions of individuals or groups in public church-oriented spheres. As such, the relationship between theory and praxis is described as a bipolar tension, and these two ideas should be neither separate nor identical. This

research agrees with Pieterse that this bipolar approach in the relationship between theory and praxis seems to be the best way to go about in Practical Theology, instead of the approach where theological theory is applied to practice. The bipolar relationship implies that both theory and praxis can be critical of each other, in constructing new theories for praxis in a research project on an aspect or field in Practical Theology.

While in current practical theological studies there are authors who start their research with a description of the current praxis, others start with a theory and in some cases an analysis of the current theory for praxis. For instance, in preaching, one may describe the theory in a conceptual framework before embarking on empirical research. From thence, a critical interaction with the current theory and the experiences in praxis as a result of the findings in the empirical research can follow, to construct a renewed theory for praxis (Pieterse 2010:106). This is the approach followed in this study. That is, this study will begin with the initial theory of preaching and Christology and then proceed to empirical data, before making conclusions from the findings.

### **Sources of justification**

Sources of justification involve the traditional sources of theological truth such as Scripture, tradition, reason and experience. The practical theologian has to decide on the theological sources that will form a basis for justification of interpretation of the reality that will be researched (Osmer 2011: 3; Pieterse 2010:104).

First, this research refers to Scripture from time to time because of the centrality of the Scripture in practical theological research, Christo-praxis and Pentecostal preaching. Anderson (2001:53) maintains that Christo-praxis (which is inherent in the Scripture), is the normative and authoritative grounding of all theological reflection in the divine act of God. Christo-praxis also upholds the divine authority of the word of God, as it is written in the Holy Scripture because the Scripture is contingent on the nature of God as revealed through the incarnate Word. Furthermore, Pentecostal preaching is and should be rooted soundly in Scripture. That is, preaching should begin and focus on the biblical text as a non-negotiable principle. Therefore, the preacher must preach the Scriptures or at least stay within its boundaries (Hughes 2004:132, cf. Nel 2017:292).

The second is tradition, which among other things, refers to the general handing over of knowledge and practices from generation to generation (Wepener 2008:316). In addition, in the context of religion, tradition is a story of the experiences and reflections of those who have gone before in the faith (Jones 1999:67). It is also a word used theologically to refer to the body of doctrines, creeds, catechisms, articles and definitions which have accumulated over a long period of orthodox Christianity (Jones 1999:75). This “tradition”, exerts a powerful influence over what one does, says or does not say about God. These definitions are important in the context of this study because the AOG (BTG), being over seventy years old, has certain traditions embedded in its praxis. Hence, the researcher will interview some preachers to tap into their experiential knowledge regarding traditional preaching practice, and its influence on contemporary preaching in the AOG (BTG).

Third is models of cross-disciplinary work. This is the task of bringing two or more fields into conversation with one another. It includes the selection of dialogue partners and how they are related to theology. Practical Theology is inherently interdisciplinary in the sense that it focuses on the lived practices of persons and communities in their social contexts. Therefore, it does not require the knowledge of theology only, but also that of human personhood alongside social and contextual knowledge. Therefore, PT requires the engagement of multiple fields of knowledge and methods of study, to address the complexity of its aims. The advantage of interdisciplinary scholarship is that practical theologians transcend the limitations conferred by single-disciplinary boundaries on what may be known and done with knowledge (Mercer 2017:163). However, the challenges of interdisciplinarity involve, *inter alia*, the complexity of engagement that results from the added labour that comes with the continual need to cope with the new areas of knowledge. To use these volumes of new knowledge makes any research venture incredibly complex (Mercer 2017:164). Therefore, this study has opted to keep interdisciplinarity minimal.

Fourth, is Theological rationale, which entails an account of the substantive theological convictions that explain why a practical theologian works in certain ways. It often grounds other methodological commitments or guides the way a practical theologian works on a particular issue (Osmer 2011:3; Pieterse 2010:104). The researcher’s theological rationale behind the study of Christology is that it is linked to several

theological disciplines such as Soteriology (the study of the doctrine of salvation). This is true in the sense that Soteriology requires an understanding of Jesus' nature. In this sense, the significance of Christology in the life of a believer cannot be overemphasised because it is only when someone recognises who Jesus is, what he did and why, that he/she can believe in him and have eternal life (as stated in John 3:11-21). In addition, Christology relates to ecclesiology (the study of the Christian Church), and Trinitarian theology, (the study of God in the Trinity - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) in indispensable ways (Campbellsville University 2016: np).

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.9.1 Research setting**

This study was conducted in the Pentecostal churches affiliated to the AOG (BTG) in the Western Reef Region. This region consists of about forty churches in and around Soweto, Carletonville, Potchefstroom, Krugersdorp, Klerksdorp, Van der Bijl Park, Randfontein, and Vereeniging. All the churches in this region are in the townships, and none are in rural areas. The researcher chose this region because he was once a pastor in one of its churches and is acquainted with some of its pastors. He, therefore, hoped that this would enhance the smooth running of the research.

### **1.9.2 Research design**

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research can be distinguished from quantitative research through some characteristics. For instance, it employs research methods such as participant observation, focus groups and interviews. Therefore, it can be said to be interdisciplinary, multi-method and multi-paradigmatic (Struwig & Stead 2001:11-12).

### **1.9.3 Data collection and analysis**

#### **Permission for access to the churches**

In preparing for the collection of data from the churches, the researcher first wrote a letter to the Western Reef Regional Council Committee (WRRCC), which is a body having oversight of the AOG churches in the Western Reef Region, (See Appendix 1 on Page 255). After permission was received from the RCC, the researcher then wrote letters of request for permission to conduct the research, to the churches he had



identified for this purpose. In these letters, he identified himself, stated the purpose of the research, as well as the research procedures that would be followed, as alluded to by Clarke (2007:424). Appendix 2 on Page 256, is a copy of these letters.

### **Sampling techniques**

There are various types of non-probability sampling such as convenience, quota, purposive, snowball, deviant case and sequential sampling (Neuman 2012:147). However, according to Tie, Birks & Francis (2019:3), many researchers commence with purposive sampling. This study combines two sampling techniques. First, by way of convenience sampling, the researcher had initially selected ten churches for live sermon observation. However, due to the onset of Covid-19, this sampling changed to recorded sermons rather than observation of live sermons. This selection was based on the proficiency of the preachers in English, to enhance easier transcription and analysis. Second, for the semi-structured interviews, this study adopted random sampling to select five pastors from the ten whose sermons were analysed.

### **Data collection methods**

Two data collection methods were adopted for triangulation purposes. First, data were collected from two live sermons and eight recorded sermons. For the two live sermons, the researcher visited the churches to observe the worship services, the overall worship environment and activities during preaching. For these purposes, he used the observation sheet, (Refer to Appendix 7 on Page 263). The rest of the sermons were pre-recorded from social media platforms. Thereafter, the sermons were transcribed.

Second, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with five of the ten preachers. For these interviews, the researcher adopted the thematic structure of the interview schedule, as shown in Appendix 6 on Page 262. One of the advantages of this method is that it allows the interviewee to answer in his/her terms than the standardised interview permits (May 1993:93).

### **Data analysis**

Qualitative data analysis was employed in this research. This entails methods of examining social research data without converting them into numerical format (Babbie



2005:387). This analysis was done through the Atlas.ti computer software. The units of analysis were the ten sermons and five preachers who were interviewed.

#### **1.9.4 Interpretation of data**

Barnard, Cilliers & Wepener (2014:54) distinguish four levels of interpretation of liturgical ritual, which in this case is preaching: First, is the liturgical ritual phenomena as perceived by the researchers and the participants. Second, is the level of the reconstruction of the phenomena by researchers and participants. Third, is the interpretation of the reconstructed phenomena by researchers and participants. Fourth, is the interpretation of the reconstructions in further academic discussions and societal and ecclesial discourses. In this research, the interpretation of the findings was based on how the researcher and the participants perceived preaching as compared to what the literature says.

#### **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study considered ethical issues such as voluntary participation, informed consent, as well as confidentiality and anonymity, as mentioned by Sieber (2009:110-111,123-124) and Babbie & Mouton (2001:521-524). (See Appendices 3 and 4 on pages 258 - 261). In addition, ethical issues such as no harm to participants, violation of privacy, actions and competence of researchers, cooperation with contributors and deception of participants were considered, as discussed by Strydom (2002:62-73). Pseudonyms are used for participants, but the region's name appears in the contents of this study.

#### **1.11 DELINEATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited to the AOG (BTG) churches in the Western Reef Region, one of the regions of this church in Gauteng. Sermons used in this study were from ten of the approximately forty churches in this region. As a qualitative cross-sectional study, this research does not aim to generalise its findings.

#### **1.12 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1 is the introduction, and it creates the context for the study. It lays the groundwork of what the study is about, regarding *inter alia*, background information, problem statement, rationale, purpose and keywords. It also discusses how this study fits within Practical Theology. Here, consideration is given to the works of Richard

Osmer on the current international perspective of Practical Theology, which deals with paradigms of Practical Theology. Furthermore, this chapter also entails a discussion of the research methodology, which includes the research setting, research design, research instruments, limitations of the study, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 2 discusses Pentecostalism, which serves as a context for preaching and Christology in the churches of AOG (BTG) in the Western Reef Region. Regarding Pentecostalism, the researcher considered, *inter alia*, its definition, its various forms, African Pentecostalism, as well as the Pentecostal hermeneutic.

Chapter 3 (Preaching) discusses various aspects of preaching in different contexts. Here, the meaning of preaching is discussed, as well as the different components entailed in the phenomenon of preaching, such as the preacher, the Scripture, the sermon and the congregation.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed discussion of Christology. It discusses, among other topics, the definition of Christology, challenges of Christology (Arianism, Nestorianism and Apollinarism), contemporary Christologies, the Christology of the NT, preaching Christ from the OT, as well as African Christology.

Chapter 5 presents data from the empirical study, as well as interpretation and discussion of the findings, based on the research question(s). In addition, other empirical research themes are dealt with.

Chapter 6 deals with the summaries and conclusions of the findings, as well as implications for future research. In addition, recommendations are given where it is deemed fit that improvements could be made.

## CHAPTER 2

### PENTECOSTALISM

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is preaching. However, as stated in Chapter 1, preaching happens in different traditions and contexts. In this chapter, consideration is given to Pentecostalism as a context of preaching, especially in the Assemblies of God (Back to God) [AOG (BTG)] churches in general, and in the Western Reef Region, in particular. Pentecostalism is a central concept of this research since the aim of this study is to explore Pentecostal preaching and the expression of Christology as an inherent part of Pentecostal theology and homiletics.

Pentecostalism is a phenomenon that has in recent times received significant attention from various perspectives. For example, from a gender perspective, Gabaitse (2015:1-12) writes about the Pentecostal hermeneutic and the marginalisation of women. Burchardt (2018:110-127), explores the extent and ways in which Pentecostals take up elements from the repertoire of liberal masculinity, and how they align with and endorse parts of what is called 'traditional', or 'traditionalist' masculinity. From a developmental point of view, The European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism discussed the theme of "Pentecostalism and Development" from various angles as it happens in various countries across the globe, during the 8th International and Interdisciplinary GloPent Conference in 2014.

From an African perspective, Kgatle (2017:1-9) discusses the doctrinal convictions of Pentecostalism, as well as the ministry of Elias Letwaba, one of the first black workers in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) church in South Africa. Resane (2018:1-9), discusses the three Classical Pentecostal denominations in South Africa, namely, the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), the Assemblies of God (AOG) and the Full Gospel Church of God (FGC); and their historical and missiological metamorphosis through the apartheid era. Furthermore, Lephoko (2010:1-259) explores the life and ministry of Nicholas Bhengu, the founder of Assemblies of God (Back to God) [AOG(BTG)]; while Mashau & Kgatle (2019:1-8), explore the prosperity gospel and the culture of greed in post-colonial Africa.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the definition, origins and development of Pentecostalism. In Chapter 1, Pentecostalism was defined as a form of pneumatic Christianity, which puts theological emphases on, *inter alia*, the authority of the Bible, and affirmation of the experiences of the Spirit, as part of formal Christian life and worship (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013:1-2). Pentecostalism is discussed as an overarching generic term that embraces many doctrinal and organisational positions (Chetty 2009:4).

The next section of this chapter deals with the origins and development of Pentecostalism. While it is presumed that the roots of Pentecostalism are in the USA, from which the movement spread to other parts of the world, including Africa, this study finds it prudent to also note the role of African precursors of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism is discussed as a sequel to the biblical feast of Pentecost (Lugo 2007:1-2) and subsequently developed during the various 19th-century precursors of Pentecostalism such as Wesley's Methodism and the Holiness movement in the USA. This then led to the revivals in North Carolina in 1896, leading to Azusa Street revivals, in Los Angeles in 1906. The discussion that then follows focuses on the movement of Pentecostalism to Africa and the global south.

Since Pentecostalism is not homogeneous, this study describes its three broad categories (namely, Classical Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Neo-Charismatics). The Assemblies of God (Back to God), as the focus of this study, belongs to the Classical Pentecostals. Particular reference is made to the South African Pentecostal landscape with a focus on the Apostolic Faith Mission, Full Gospel Church and Assemblies of God as the pioneering Classical Pentecostal churches.

In developing Pentecostalism as the context of preaching within the AOG (BTG), this study explores some pertinent aspects such as the Pentecostal worldview and participation in socio-political activities and Pentecostals' political engagement in South Africa. Furthermore, the next section includes some doctrinal tenets, rituals and practices of Pentecostal belief, the Pentecostal hermeneutic, Pentecostal worship, preaching in the Pentecostal tradition, as well as the economic message of Pentecostals and the prosperity gospel.

Like all church traditions, Pentecostalism has its strengths and challenges. Hence, the inclusion of the sections on the strengths of the movement as well as its challenges, and their bearing on Pentecostal preaching.

## **2.2 THE DEFINITION, ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PENTECOSTALISM**

### **2.2.1 Defining Pentecostalism**

“An attempt to explain Pentecostalism is as difficult as attempting to explain the Trinity or Eternity.” (Bolarinwa n.d.:10). If it is so difficult to explain Pentecostalism, it will be even more so to define it.

Despite the wide-ranging research and authorship about Pentecostalism, Suarsana (2014:1) highlights the challenge of defining Pentecostalism. Although statistics estimated about half a billion adherents of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in the world, by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the broad consensus about the definition of Pentecostalism has come under attack. Therefore, this study will only offer some views in terms of the various descriptions of Pentecostalism.

By nature, Pentecostalism is multi-faceted and splintered, with a variety of expressions and a range of theological positions. Therefore, it is neither homogeneous nor monolithic (Ambrose 2012:72). While many Pentecostal groups are fundamentalist, some are liberal, and others combine several of these theological positions (Anderson 2013:2). Therefore, it can be said that Pentecostalism is an overarching generic term that embraces a plethora of doctrinal and organisational positions. In addition, the Pentecostal movement is not led by any centralised structure (like for example, the Roman Catholic Church). Most Pentecostals view themselves as part of larger Christian formations (Chetty 2009:4). However, despite their differences, Pentecostals see themselves as part of a special and sacred community whose identity and unity are aggressively promoted to those who are outside (Mbe 2002: 362).

According to Anderson (2013:5-6), some authors use the term ‘Renewalists’ to refer to the totality of Pentecostals, Charismatics and Neo-charismatics. Although not clearly stated, it is presumed that the term ‘Pentecostal’ is used to refer to Classical Pentecostals; ‘Charismatic’ refers to those who practice spiritual gifts in the older Catholic and Protestant denominations. In this case, Catholic charismatics form the

majority. 'Neo-charismatics' includes all others, especially the vast number of independent churches. This group of Neo-charismatics accounts for about two-thirds of the total number of Renewalists.

Unlike Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism has no theological standard by which to evaluate it globally. Despite some variations, the essence of Pentecostalism is the belief in the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the term 'Pentecostal' is appropriate in describing all churches and movements in the world that emphasise the working of the gifts of the Spirit (Straub 2016: 209).

Furthermore, Pentecostalism cannot be defined in purely doctrinal terms because various other practices commonly attend Pentecostalism. These include divine healing, speaking in tongues, and prophetic utterances. In addition, the prosperity gospel (of which more will be said in the coming discussion), is pervasive in contemporary Pentecostalism although it was not part of the early Pentecostal practices. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that Pentecostals are diverse in their belief and praxis (Straub 2016:211).

Asamoah-Gyadu (2007:390) describes Pentecostalism as that stream of Christianity that emphasises personal salvation in Christ as a transformative experience brought about by the Holy Spirit. In this experience, such pneumatic phenomena as speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing, miracles, and signs and wonders in general, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members as evidence of the active presence of God's Spirit.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2007:397) argues that since "orthodox Christianity" was unable to recognise the value of the non-rational aspect of religion, it had "a one-sidedly intellectualistic approach," to Christianity. Therefore, Pentecostalism came as a response to such cerebral Christianity. Consequently, Pentecostalism defines itself in terms of the recovery of the experiential aspects of the Christian faith by demonstrating the power of the Spirit to infuse life and the ability of the living presence of Jesus Christ to save from sin and evil.

In summary, Pentecostalism is to be understood as experiential Christianity, with its experience culminating in the baptism of the believer in the Holy Spirit. This baptism is evidenced, as at Pentecost, by speaking in other tongues. Furthermore, this experience

with the Spirit should continue, as in the early church, in the exercise of the spiritual gifts privately and then publicly in the Pentecostal meetings where the gifts have their most significant sphere of operations. (Bruner 1980:21; cf. Bolarinwa n.d.:10).

According to Freeman (2016:3-4), there are three broad categories of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity: Classical Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Neo-Charismatic. The Classical Pentecostal category refers to churches with links to the early American and European Pentecostal movement, which stress the importance of speaking in tongues as evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Examples include the Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ and the Pentecostal Church of God. In Classical Pentecostalism, there is a pervasive emphasis on personal holiness, the place of work in the life of a believer and cooperating with the Holy Spirit to “work out your salvation” (Chetty 2009:4). Charismatic Christians are those members of mainline Christian denominations such as Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Catholic, who began to experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the form of speaking in tongues, spiritual healing and miracles. The third category is Neo-Charismatics, which is the broadest category, serving much as a catch-all for the vast number of non-denominational or post-denominational churches and fellowships. This category exploded onto the scene in the 1980s (Freeman 2016:3-4). Charismatic churches have their name deriving from St. Paul's expression *charismata pneumatika*, meaning Gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12-14). The gifts of the Spirit refer to the "extraordinary graces" attributable to the experience of the Holy Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:390).

Neo-Charismatics have been particularly creative and innovative in their adaptation of Pentecostal doctrine and styles to new settings and contexts. Examples could include Mensa Otabil's International Central Gospel Church, David Oyepedo's Winner's Chapel, the Rhema Church and the Vineyard Fellowship (Freeman 2016:4).

This study notices that while there is a broad agreement on the description of Classical Pentecostal churches (which also include Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), and Full Gospel Church (FGC)), what Freeman (2016:3-4) calls Charismatic churches, some authors call Neo-Pentecostal; and instead of having Neo-Charismatics, some writers include African Initiated/Independent Churches (AICs). For this category, Migwi (2016:15) uses the term African Pentecostal Churches or Indigenous/Independent Pentecostal Churches (IPCs). These are the churches founded by Africans without



any relationship with mission Pentecostal churches. They are largely locally founded, self-financing, self-governing and self-supporting. Examples include the Redeemed Gospel Church, Winners Chapel International and Christ Embassy. Their doctrinal emphasis is on perfection, strict personal ethics, biblical inerrancy, and a disdain for carnal pleasures, which are viewed as sinful. They also emphasise personal salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues (Migwi 2016:15). This attests to the amorphous and fluid nature of the term Pentecostalism, which makes it a concept difficult to define.

According to Frahm-Arp (2018:2), Pentecostalism can be discussed, defined or classified in many ways. First, is the Historiography approach, in which it is proposed that Pentecostalism falls under broad historical categories like Classical Pentecostals, the Charismatic renewal movement, Pentecostal or “Pentecostal-like” Independent Churches, and Fourth Wave Pentecostalism. The second approach is to classify Pentecostalism according to perceived characteristics and phenomena, as done by social scientists. The third approach is to study Pentecostalism according to theological themes, doctrines, and ideas. For instance, Chetty (2009:4) mentions that Pentecostals also display doctrinal variations, with some formations revealing Trinitarian and others non-Trinitarian persuasions.

Frahm-Arp (2018:2-3) uses the “family resemblance analogy” which was adopted from Anderson (2013:1) to describe the different forms of Pentecostalism as follows: While members of the family group are not all the same, there are commonalities and similarities between them as they are all in a relationship with one another. Pentecostalism as a “family” of churches has the following as some of its defining characteristics:

- Pentecostals are open to and engage with experiences of the Holy Spirit, including the prophetic gifts of many of their pastors.
- Their members are “born again,” that is, they have experienced a conversion in which they claim Jesus as their Saviour. This experience ensures their access to the faith community.
- They have a dualistic view of the world. That is, the world is divided between “good” and “evil,” Satan and God, illness and health, a world in which their pastors have the ability to drive out evil.



For them, ancestor veneration is not an acceptable practice. They demand that members break with this African heritage. Pentecostalism strongly opposes practices connected with ‘traditional’ beliefs and rituals and Eastern mysticism. Their doctrines focus on a direct relationship with God through prayer. Furthermore, everyone is given an opportunity for more personal involvement and participation in the church (Mbe 2002: 362).

Pentecostal churches are found among all classes and ethnic categories, as well as in urban and rural areas all over the globe. Pentecostal churches meet in living rooms, classrooms and constructed shelters, as well as in very big auditoriums. In recent years, Pentecostalism has grown remarkably in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. Initially, Pentecostalism appealed to the disadvantaged and underprivileged, whose desire was upward social mobility, which was perceived to be nurtured and sometimes realised by what Pentecostalism offered (Anderson 2013:2).

### **2.2.2 The origins and development of Pentecostalism**

The name “Pentecostal” is taken from the biblical feast of Pentecost (the Jewish feast of *Shavuot*), which took place fifty days after Passover. On this day, the early disciples of Jesus were “filled with the Holy Spirit” and began to “speak in other tongues.” However, the modern Pentecostal movement has its roots in the American Midwest (Lugo 2007:1). There are various nineteenth century precursors of Pentecostalism such as Wesley’s Methodism, the Keswick Convention in the UK, John Nelson Darby’s ‘dispensationalism’, the divine healing movement, as well as John Alexander Dowie’s utopian Zion City near Chicago. However, it is the Holiness (or Sanctification) movement in the USA, which is considered by most historians to have had the most direct influence on Pentecostalism. This movement started as a reaction to liberalism and formalism in established Protestant churches. The Holiness movement stood for Biblical literalism, the need for a personal and individual experience of conversion and the moral perfection (holiness) of the Christian individual (Gooren 2004:207).

The technical use of the word Pentecostalism started in the 20th century. There is, however, a disagreement as to whether the Pentecostal revival started in North Carolina in 1896, in Topeka, Kansas in 1901 or in Azusa Street, Los Angeles in 1906 (cf. Mashau 2013:3). Some state that the beginning of Pentecostalism can be dated

to 1901 when Agnes Ozman was baptised in the Spirit. This happened in Topeka, Kansas, in the USA in the Bethel Bible School where Charles F. Parham was the principal. In 1905, he was followed by William Seymour, an African American preacher who also began preaching about the baptism of the Spirit and the gift of speaking in tongues (Lugo 2007:2).

It is further documented that the manifestations of the Spirit occurred in an old building at 312 Azusa Street in 1906-1909. This revival manifested in salvation, healings, baptism in the Spirit and the accompanying tongues. Pentecostals agree that the Pentecostal experience is not a religious innovation and that in one form or another, it has always manifested within the history of the Christian Church (cf. Mashau 2013:3).

Not long after the revival of Azusa Street in Los Angeles, ethical convictions, which were once strongly held and spontaneously practised, such as the intermingling of races, gradually faded. When the white congregants returned to their congregations with the type of worship from Azusa Street, they reverted to their former practices of Whites only. Parham, who was the “theological father” of Azusa Street revivals, eventually ended up with the Ku Klux Klan, an extreme right-wing “Whites only” group. Therefore, by 1920, the interracial fellowship in Los Angeles, completely gave way to former separate, predominantly black or white Pentecostal congregations (Chetty 2009:3).

However, Chetty (2009:11-12) argues that the idea that all Pentecostal movements can trace their lineage to Seymour’s Azusa Street mission or Parham’s initiative is erroneous. This is because other scholars identify other equally significant and simultaneous Pentecostal outpourings, which have been overlooked in that narrative. The contention is that when Los Angeles is assumed to be the ‘Jerusalem’ from which the new ‘full gospel’ emanates centrifugally to all the ends of the earth, then the truth is manipulated. Other Pentecostal outpourings, which can be identified, included those in Pyongyang (Korea), Beijing (China), Poona (India), Wakkerstroom (South Africa), Lagos (Nigeria), Valparaiso (Chile), Belem (Brazil), Oslo (Norway) and Sunderland (England). This attests to the fact that Pentecostalism has had many beginnings and it is consequently not monolithic.

Furthermore, Bolarinwa (n.d.:12) also argues that to speak of the origin or the beginning of Pentecostalism or Pentecostal Movement(s) as the product of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century revival

at Azuza Street in the USA, is a misconception and is far from the truth. Instead, Bolarinwa describes the biblical origin of Pentecostalism from the word Pentecost, which is the old Greek and Latin name for the Jewish Festival of Weeks (*Shavuot*), (according to Exodus 34:22 and Deuteronomy 16:9-10). This feast is also called the Festival of Reaping in Exodus 23:16, and the Day of the First Fruits (*Yom ha-Bikkurim*) in Numbers 28:26. *Shavuot* comes up on the 50<sup>th</sup> day from the Passover. The Hellenistic Jews gave it the name *Pentecosto* (meaning 50<sup>th</sup> in English). According to Jewish tradition, Pentecost commemorates God's giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, on the 50<sup>th</sup> day from the Passover that led to Exodus (Bolarinwa n.d.:12).

To understand the story of Pentecost, two significant features must be considered: First, the original Feast of gathering-in of the sheaves (*Shavuot*) on the fiftieth day following the killing of Passover Lamb is an Old Testament typology of the gathering-in of the First-fruits of the Universal people of God, on the fiftieth day after the Lamb of God was 'slaughtered' without the gate of Jerusalem. On this day, the Holy Spirit (the promise of the Father) came upon the disciples as recorded in Acts 2. Second, just as God promised and fulfilled the promise of the blessing upon the land of Canaan, so he promised and fulfilled the promise of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in Joel 2:28 and Acts 2. Therefore, the Church of Jesus Christ was birthed on this important event, and by implication, if there is no Pentecost, there is no New Testament Church. Therefore, according to Bolarinwa, it is amazing that many so-called Pentecostals claim the monopoly of not only the knowledge of the importance of Pentecostal power but also the possession of this power (Bolarinwa n.d.:12).

### **2.3 AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM**

The perception of Christianity as a predominantly European and American religion changed significantly, as it shifted to the global south. This was mainly due to the emergence of Pentecostalism. Christianity did not only shift southwards, but it also changed fundamentally in character. After the revivals, which led to the formation of Pentecostal churches in Wales, Estonia, India, the USA and Korea, the revivals spread to various parts of China, West Africa, South Africa and East Africa in the 1920s. As a result, many Independent Churches were formed. The formation of these churches was motivated by eschatological expectations about the imminent second coming of Christ (Anderson 2013:1).

African Pentecostalism is often perceived as an imported religion, due to its origins being exterior to the continent. However, while it is true that its origins may be exogenous, and that Western missionaries propelled its spread, such a view needs to be strongly tempered. Pentecostalism's African development cannot be understood as an Americanisation of local religious life. Such an interpretation does not take into consideration how Pentecostalism was locally reinvented, and the growing complexity of Christian currents of exchange (Mayrargue 2008:4).

African Pentecostalism can be described as part of Christianity in Africa that is influenced by a Pentecostal movement that started in the early Church of the Apostles as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. The Pentecostal movement that started in the United States of America later revived it. Its major doctrinal characteristics are justification by faith, sanctification by grace, the baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues, divine healing and the personal pre-millennial rapture of the saints at the second coming of Christ (Kgatle 2017:4).

African Pentecostal churches emerged as a radical expression of cultural resistance enabling Southern African blacks to mitigate the sufferings imposed by capitalism, colonialism and apartheid. These churches practice a Christianity that is contextualised to the needs of Africans and the theology of the Holy Spirit. African Pentecostalism is not a movement that was started and developed by external change agents, and neither is it dependent on transnational networks. Rather, it was started and developed by an indigenous worldview that answers questions raised by various African worldviews. These Pentecostal churches distinctively appropriate the Christian message, to provide locally meaningful answers to local questions and problems, based primarily on their perspective of understanding the Bible (Kgatle 2017:4).

### **2.3.1 Development of African Pentecostalism**

Contrary to some people's views, Pentecostalism has been present in Africa for some time now. The first Western missionaries arrived on the continent in the second decade of the twentieth century. For example, missionaries from the American Assemblies of God first arrived in Liberia in 1914 and Burkina Faso in 1921. British missionaries arrived in Nigeria and Ghana in the 1930s. However, in South Africa, the missionaries arrived as early as 1908. An African Evangelical and Pentecostal renewal began as early as the 1970s and were more noticeable in the 1980s. The revival

spread due to new trans-national Christian groups, among whom were Neo-Pentecostals. This renewal first appeared in English-speaking countries, such as Nigeria in West Africa, Kenya in the East, and South Africa. It then developed in countries of Central Africa and French-speaking West Africa in the 1990s and recently in countries like Senegal (Mayrargue 2008:3-4).

The African precursors of Pentecostalism were indigenous prophet figures, many of whom were persecuted out of historic mission denominations for pursuing spiritualities which were perceived by Church authority as belonging to occults. These prophet figures include William Wade Harris of the Gold Coast (Ghana), Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger Delta, and Simon Kimbangu of the Congo. They challenged their fellow Africans to forsake their traditional resources of the supernatural and to turn toward the living God of the Bible. They convinced their fellow Africans that God alone was able to rescue people from the fear of witchcraft, medicines, and spiritual principalities and powers. Many of these revivalist campaigns which happened in the nineteenth century only resulted in independent churches when the prophets had left the scene (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:390).

The prophetic movements were thus followed by the emergence of the popular Spiritual, *Aladura* or Zionist churches known collectively as "African Independent" or "African Initiated" churches (AICs). These AICs aimed at restoring to the African church the vitality of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the absence of which was perceived to be a "dry denominationalism" of the mission churches. Healing became the single most important activity for these AICs. However, many of them strayed into therapeutic methods that were not Christian. Subsequently, it has become contentious to regard these older AICs as Pentecostal. As such, most AICs belong to separate associations from those formed by mainstream Pentecostals (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:390).

Other Pentecostal collectivities found in Africa include New [Independent] Pentecostal Churches (NPCs), and trans-denominational Pentecostal fellowships like the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International (FGBMFI), Women Aglow, and Intercessors for Africa, as well as Charismatic renewal groups of the mainline churches. Therefore, in Africa today, we do not only have major Western mission-related Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God, but we also have

African-initiated ones like William F. Kumuyi's Deeper Christian Life Ministry. This church started in Nigeria in 1973. In addition, there are many "mega" NPCs like Mensa Otabil's International Central Gospel Church in Ghana and Andrew Wutawanashe's Family of God in Zimbabwe. These churches were also born out of local initiatives. Research shows that African churches, particularly those from the Pentecostal stream, have gone back to former missionary countries with the mode of African Christianity. For example, the Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) in London was founded by Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo in 1992. Within ten years it has grown to become the biggest single church in Europe (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:391)

Statistics show that there are about 126 million Pentecostals and Charismatics, in Africa. This number constitutes about 11% of the continent's total population. Of these, about 109 million, have joined since 1980. While Christianity has been in Africa since colonial times, what is new about Pentecostalism is that it fits extremely well with African ontologies and sensibilities, even though its roots are in the USA (Freeman 2016:3). In North America, many of the early manifestations of Pentecostalism were found in religious expressions of slaves. These slaves retained much of the African religious culture from which they had been taken. The African religious practices were remoulded to adapt to the diasporic Christian context, and this manifested in the Azusa Street revival as authenticity to African American holistic Christianity. However, outward manifestations of this flexibility in different cultures and religions were not always acceptable to Westerners. Western Christians were drawn by their sense of cultural decorum toward promoting a more cerebral and less emotional expression of Pentecostal practice (Anderson 2013:4). Pentecostalism is today a global movement with African countries such as Nigeria claiming 56 million Pentecostals. In South Africa, with a population of 55 million, 24 million are Pentecostals (Straub 2016:217).

Whereas earlier forms of Christianity transposed from Europe ignored African traditional beliefs in spirits and demons, Pentecostalism shares the basic African ontology of good and bad spirits. At the same time, it embraces supernatural beings (God, Jesus, demons) that can have a direct influence on the world. In this way, Pentecostalism resonates more with African beliefs than earlier forms of Christianity (Freeman 2016:3).



From a Ghanaian context, Quayesi-Amakye (2016:72) argues that “Pentecostalism fulfils the quest for an authentic Christianity that satisfies Africans’ socio-religious aspirations.” This was the kind of Christianity that earlier African Christians longed for. As a result, Pentecostalism became popular among the historic mission churches. According to Quayesi-Amakye (2016:74-75), Pentecostal ecclesiology portrays a “theology of culture” in that it is committed to the struggle with forces that oppress cultures. It is because of its ability to contextualise the gospel to the needs of Africans and its sympathy for local cultures that Pentecostalism has been pervasive in Africa.

Pentecostalism is unevenly distributed in Africa, with some areas serving as points of anchorage for Pentecostal missionary organisations. In the interior countries, big cities and urban areas are the favoured locations for new Pentecostal movements. These movements later spread to smaller cities and rural areas (Mayrargue 2008:4).

### **The missionary character of Pentecostalism in Africa**

Coupled with the resurgence of charismata in the congregational life of the Pentecostal churches today, is the motivation for evangelism and missions. Therefore, African Pentecostals are very mission-minded and use very aggressive forms of evangelism to get people converted to Christianity. Hence evangelism is a critical Pentecostal strategy, with the highest priority. From a Pentecostal theological point of view, evangelism means to go out and reach the ‘lost’ for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. This approach to mission includes personal witnessing, crusades and large tent campaigns wherein healing is preached. African Pentecostal preachers emphasise the manifestation of divine power through healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, miracles, etc. Exorcism and protection from evil are amongst the most prominent features of Pentecostal evangelism and church recruitment tactics. This message has shown to be effective and relevant in Africa since the continent is poverty-stricken, and experiences various diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Mashau 2013:5).

### **2.3.2 Pentecostalism in South Africa**

While Sewapa (2016:1-67) analyses only the historical origins of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in South Africa, Resane (2018:1-2) traces the origins and development of the three major Classical Pentecostal churches in South Africa, namely, the

Apostolic Faith Mission, the Assemblies of God (AOG) and the Full Gospel Church of God (FGC). Furthermore, Lephoko (2018:63-233) discusses the history of the Assemblies of God in South Africa and the life and ministry of Nicholas Hepworth Bhengu.

### **2.3.2.1 The Apostolic Faith Mission**

The Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa (which is today the largest Pentecostal group in South Africa with about 1.4 million members) started in 1908. Its origin is attributed to the Zionist revival events run by John Graham Lake (1870-1935), assisted by Thomas Hezmalhalch. Lake and Hezmalhalch began their Pentecostal healing services in Doornfontein, Johannesburg on 25 May 1908. These evangelistic meetings were attended by multiracial audiences, and hundreds of people were converted, baptised in the Holy Spirit and healed (Straub 2016:222; Sewapa 2016:20).

The Zionist revival started when the Zion church hired the premises of the Presbyterian Church at 88 Bree Street, Doornfontein, Johannesburg. John Lake and Hezmalhalch were invited to conduct services there. As a result, the entire congregation was won over by the Pentecostal movement. It was in that Presbyterian Church that the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa was launched. Thomas Hezmalhalch was elected as its first president on 27 May 1909, with John G. Lake as the first Vice-President. That was the year in which the AFM of SA was formally organised to be the first Pentecostal denomination in South Africa. Later the church gained recognition by the South African government. Some of its other prominent pastors were J.H. Greef and P.L. le Roux. In 1910, John Lake was appointed as its president. He held this title in an honorary capacity until he died in 1935 (Sewapa 2016:20-21).

John Lake became a prominent leader due to his powerful ministry of preaching and divine healing. He became so popular that the then apartheid South African Prime Minister, Louis Botha, consulted him regularly for guidance on how to deal with issues concerning the black population. This church was also blessed with black Charismatic leaders such as Elias Letwaba and Richard Ngidi (Resane 2018:1-2).

During his ministry in South Africa from 1908 to 1913, John Lake established about 125 white congregations and over 500 black congregations. When he arrived, he found the congregations of Alexander Dowie and some Reformed Churches in



existence. Later these churches accepted the message of Pentecostals and were later affiliated with the AFM. As a result of the miracles and signs which accompanied John Lake's ministry, the Zionist Church and 20 Reformed churches became Pentecostal (Sewapa 2016:19).

Before his work in the AFM, P.L. le Roux was a missionary in the Dutch Reformed Church. Later he became a pastor in the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, and finally, for 29 years, he became the president of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1914. This was after John Lake had left South Africa (Sewapa 2016:18-19). Le Roux was the first South African Afrikaans speaking leader of the AFM. Due to Le Roux's influence, many black people as well as Afrikaans-speaking people joined the AFM (Resane 2018:1-2).

The AFM then adopted the church racial division that was followed by the Dutch Reformed Church's polity. It followed the pattern of many other church formations in South Africa. The white leadership of the AFM identified with the socio-political developments of the time by holding the rest of the church in its sway. By complying with the *status quo*, the church expressed a strong resistance to communism and Black Nationalism, and an emotional identification with Afrikaner nationalism. As a result, championing justice was equated with rebellion, terrorism, communism or 'swart gevaar' (Resane 2018:2).

Segregation became evident as the then completely White-ruled AFM continued with a mission practice of 'daughter churches', similar to that practised by the Dutch Reformed churches. This eventually led to the establishment of four major groupings in the AFM: The White (parent) church, a large Black daughter church, a Coloured (mixed race) daughter church, and an Indian daughter church. This was the order of the church until 1996 when this structure changed to reflect the new democratic dispensation. It was then that the four sections of the AFM united under one constitution, with a democratically elected church government (Resane 2018:2).

### **2.3.2.2 The Full Gospel Church.**

The Full Gospel Church (FGC) has some historical landmarks of black people contending for unity in the church, where people would not be racially discriminated against. The first open agitation for unity within the FGC began in 1975, initiated by

the three black constituencies (Anderson & Pillay 1997:235). This led to the formation of the non-racial Ordained Ministers Council (OMC) in 1986. Right up to 1995, contentions ensued for racial unity within the church. Negotiations for change were in progress for some sixteen years. The communities that decided to unite, became one integrated association within the FGC. In March 1990 the United Assemblies of the FGC was constituted. This group consisted of the majority of the black community, mixed-race community, the Indian community, as well as a small group from the white community. The church then had two groups instead of four. These were Irene Assemblies and the United Assemblies. In October 1997, the whole FGC in Southern Africa united to become one structural organisation. This made the FGC a non-racial and structurally integrated church (Resane 2018:2).

### **2.3.2.3 The Assemblies of God**

The Assemblies of God in South Africa can be dated back to March 1907 when Charles William Chawner, a Canadian, arrived in Cape Town. From Cape Town, he went to De Aar and then to Ladysmith in Natal. After some time in Zululand and Vryheid, he moved to Morgenzon in southern-eastern Transvaal. He then ministered in Pretoria and Johannesburg before returning to Toronto, Canada, where he reunited with his family. He spent a short time ministering and testifying about the work in Zululand and then returned to South Africa together with his wife and two children. His son's name was Charles Austin Chawner, who grew up with his parents. Charles William Chawner was accepted among the people of South Africa as one of them. Subsequently, Chawner planted many churches in South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. He also served as the general secretary, treasurer and later the chairman of the Assemblies of God (Lephoko 2018:63-64).

Charles William Chawner was then followed by Henry and Anna Turney in 1908, who were from an American Baptist background. Together with Miss Hannah A. James from England, they formed a team ministering among the black people in the Pretoria area. Turney started a church which was called the Pentecostal Assembly. He pastored this work for some time, and then entrusted its oversight to Archibald H. Cooper, who later became one of the founders of the Full Gospel Church (Lephoko 2018:64).

In 1911, the team of Charles William Chawner, Henry and Anna Turney moved to Doornkop near Middelburg in the then Eastern Transvaal to establish a very successful mission station (Resane 2018:2). The name 'Assemblies of God' was later adopted at a conference of workers, representing several independent assemblies, at Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA in 1914. This name appealed to many people throughout the Christian world, and Mr and Mrs Turney decided to link up with the newly formed 'Assemblies of God' in the USA. After being granted recognition by the newly formed Assemblies of God in the USA in 1917, Mr and Mrs Turney registered the South African work with the South African government as the 'Assemblies of God'. Until 1935, the South African 'Assemblies of God' operated almost exclusively among non-Europeans. In 1935, however, a decision was taken to give recognition to assemblies working among the Europeans. The first to link up were Mr Louis B. Potgieter, and Mr and Mrs W.F. Mullan, in the early part of 1936 (Lephoko 2005:23-24; 2018:65).

Austin Chawner, the son of Charles William Chawner, had started a small printing press, at the mission station at Shingwedzi, near Louis Trichardt in 1929. Later the printing press was moved to Lourenco Marques (Maputo). Together with H.C. Phillips, Austin Chawner moved the printing press to Nelspruit in 1938. Later in 1939 the printing press became known as the Emmanuel Press (Lephoko 2018:66).

On 14 December 1938, at the General Conference held in Nelspruit, a decision was made to change the existing policy of the Assemblies of God. All sections of the AOG were given complete autonomy, with the right to own their properties and govern their affairs (Lephoko 2018:66-67)

At the end of 1938, the Emmanuel Mission became an integral part of the Assemblies of God of South Africa. This merger brought into close fellowship Hubert C. Phillips, James E. Mullan, Nicholas B.H. Bhengu, Alfred H.L. Gumede, Gideon Buthelezi and others. These men played important roles in the building up of the Assemblies of God. What God did among the Europeans through James E. Mullan was repeated among the Africans through the ministry of Nicholas B.H. Bhengu. His evangelistic tent campaigns were successful (Lephoko 2018:68-67).

Currently, the AOG consists of three groups under one multiracial General Executive. The AOG (Back to God) operates and governs itself under the Executive Committee. The Association (mixed race people and Indian people) is led by the Apostolic Team,

while the Group (initially consisting of white people) are under the National Leadership Team. These three groups differ from each other, although they operate under one General Executive and hold a biennial general conference. Unlike the AFM and Full Gospel Church, the AOG boasts a track record of never barring any person from fellowship due to race or colour as per their constitutional dictates (Resane 2018:2).

Recently there have been talks about forging unity within the three groups. For instance, at the 2019 September AOG general conference, the three groups discussed pragmatic ways of unity among themselves.

### **The ministry of Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu**

Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu, who is the founder of the Assemblies of God (Back to God) was born at eNtumeni in Zululand (near Eshowe). He was a son of a Lutheran pastor and a grandson of the Zulu chief. He was converted in 1929 during a crusade conducted by an American evangelist from the Full Gospel Church. He attended the S.A.G.M. Bible School near Durban. He later linked up with Mr H. C. Philips to work at the Emmanuel Mission in Nelspruit. Two years later, Mr Philips and the Emmanuel Mission, including Bhengu, became part of the Assemblies of God. In 1938, Bhengu was ordained as an evangelist of the Assemblies of God. When his ministry grew and became more effective around 1939-40, Nicholas Bhengu, with a few Christian friends, started a movement they called the South African Christian Campaign (Mbamalu 2002:88-89; Lephoko 2018:68-69).

As time went on, Nicholas Bhengu, Alfred Gumede and Gideon Buthelezi perceived an anti-black development attitude from white leaders of the Assemblies of God. They confronted them at the 1945 Nelspruit conference. The segregation that ensued led to blacks, under the leadership of Bhengu, organising a young black Assemblies of God church. It was racism, rejection and political marginalisation which forced black South Africans to flock to the Back to God Ministry of Nicholas Bhengu. By 1950, when Bhengu's ministry gained popularity in Southern Africa, he adopted the name Back to God Movement (Mbamalu 2002:89).

According to Lephoko (2010:206-207), while there were theological differences regarding the role of churches against the apartheid government in South Africa, during his time, Nicholas Bhengu chose a position of non-participation in party political

activities. Nevertheless, he was well versed in what was happening in the socio-political landscape of the country at that time. He focused on preaching the gospel and thereby hoped to bring peace and stability amongst different racial groups. He hoped that this would eventually result in eliminating racial and political tensions, with the ultimate goal of introducing democracy in South Africa. This helped him to be in a position where he was able to minister to everybody regardless of party-political affiliation. Consequently, he found favour with all political leaders in apartheid South Africa, both black and white, including the South African government (Lephoko 2018:233).

Bhengu had a huge influence on the Assemblies of God. This is clearly shown in the words of Colin La Foy, former general secretary of the Assemblies of God:

“The respect for Nicholas Bhengu as the minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ transcended the Assemblies of God far, far beyond that, within the Assemblies of God cross-culturally. He was held in tremendous high esteem, and I think he was instrumental to break down a lot of the black-white taboos because people began to see a black man of God, speaking the truth of God’s word under the unction and the power of the Holy Spirit. And the very old mindset of racism was challenged, not because he challenged it, racism was simply challenged by the demonstration of God in his life. That for me was one of the powerful things that had people sit back and re-think the black-white issue by the simple demonstration of the giftedness of God which was in him. ... I believe it was the stature of Nicholas Bhengu that created respect for people of colour and prevented the application of apartheid to a degree that is applied to any other church. ... And I want to say that if it was not for the stature of Nicholas Bhengu, the Assemblies of God could very well, probably have gone the same way, because we have the same sick people in our church, but they could not do it against the man of that stature. For me, that makes the Assemblies of God different. Not the people but Nicholas Bhengu made the difference” (Lephoko 2018:74-75).

Bhengu’s focus on ministering to everybody without party-political affiliation was not without problems of its own. In the 1960s some black radicals regarded him as a “sell-out”, and he received letters that threatened his life. While many expected Bhengu to oppose the apartheid government and support the liberation struggle, he instead embraced the homeland leaders. He would invite them to his church’s conventions (Lephoko 2018:233).

There is a perception that since most of the AOG (BTG) churches started as a result of the powerful evangelistic campaigns conducted by Nicholas Bhengu, most of the churches adopted this evangelistic approach to preaching, with minimal focus on teaching. Therefore, presently some concerns have been raised that the church has not sufficiently engaged in the teaching ministry.

#### **2.3.2.4 Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in South Africa**

Due to the fluid nature of the term Pentecostalism, what this study terms Neo-Pentecostal churches, Kaunda (2015:12) calls them New African Pentecostal churches. The New African Pentecostalism (NAP) is a dynamic and popular brand of Christianity in post-apartheid South Africa because it engages with the socio-historical struggles of the masses in black communities. The NAP among black South Africans took the centre stage only after 1994. From thence it became so popular that at the beginning of the twenty-first century between 10 to 40 per cent of South Africa's population could be termed 'Pentecostal', depending on how Pentecostalism is defined.

The NAP can be distinguished from Classical Pentecostalism, and the African Initiated Churches (AICs) in that it is essentially an urban phenomenon and relates to a westernised urban black culture. It attracts the young generation of middle-class Africans, the elite and fairly educated section of the population. One example, is Grace Bible Church in Soweto, south of Johannesburg, led by Bishop Mosa Sono. This is the largest church in Soweto, with a membership of between 8 000 and 10 000 in 2010. The NAP is characterised by an ideology of spiritual superiority, prosperity gospel and a strong emphasis on the ethics of 'separation from the world'. This means 'breaking' with cultural pasts and social relations which are deemed as constraints to the attainment of progress and prosperity. Once incorporated into the household of the Spirit, the believer is expected to strive to maintain the bond of the Spirit in two ways: First, through continuous involvement in the church's religious, social and welfare activities; and second, through abstinence from what is popularly described as traditional rituals and practices (Kaunda 2015:113).

## 2.4 BIASES IN PENTECOSTAL HISTORY

Anderson (2004:2-3) bemoans the fact that little attention has been given to the theology and praxis that made Pentecostal movements. He also questions the fact that processes of expansion into Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific are not linked to the efforts and vision of its non-Western pioneers. Historians of Pentecostalism have often reflected a bias in interpreting history from a predominantly white American perspective. They have not given due regard to the significant work of Asian, African, African American, Caribbean and Latino Pentecostal pioneers. These histories included a white racial bias that also ignored the central influence of black culture on Pentecostal worship and theology. In addition, the historians painted another serious distortion of a persistent gender bias in which the leading role of women was overlooked. For example, the African American worker Lucy Farrow was not only a leader at Azusa Street but was also one of the first Pentecostal missionaries to reach Africa (Liberia). However, she has largely been left out of the history of Pentecostalism (Anderson 2004:2-3).

Pentecostal histories usually begin with American pioneers like Charles Parham and William Seymour. There are then records of the beginnings of Pentecostalism in other countries through missionaries from the West such as John G. Lake (Canadian) who is credited with the founding of Pentecostalism in South Africa. George Berg (German American) founded the work in India, while Gunnar Vingren (Swedish) and Luis Francescon (Italian American) started work in Brazil. Furthermore, William Burton (English) founded the work in the Congo. While noting the important role of these missionaries, indeed many historians have still not acknowledged or have overlooked or minimised the vital role of thousands of national workers in early Pentecostalism, particularly in Asia and Africa (Anderson 2004:3).

It is worthwhile to acknowledge the courageous work of the early Pentecostal missionaries from the West. But equally important, is that the contribution of African, Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and Pacific evangelists and pastors who started Pentecostal work in these regions should be properly acknowledged. This will recognise that Pentecostalism's rapid expansion in the twentieth century was not only due to missionaries from North America and Western Europe to Africa, Asia and Latin America, but was especially the result of the spontaneous contextualisation of the



Pentecostal message by local preachers. These preachers, through the power of the Spirit, proclaimed the message of Christ, with the accompanying healing of the sick (Anderson 2004:5).

In Ghana, for example, it was the emergence, in the 1920s, of indigenous Charismatic figures such as Prophet William Wade Harris, Prophet John Swatson, and Prophet Sampson Oppong. These revivalists made the gospel relevant to the indigenous people by connecting the Christian message with the spiritual needs of Ghanaians, demonstrating that God cares about their needs and wants to make provision for them. They also presented a solution for turning away from traditional resources of supernatural support to seek refuge in the Almighty God (White 2017:3-4).

One of the reasons for the distorted picture of Pentecostal origins is the problem of documentary sources. Early Pentecostal history outside the Western world almost entirely depended on reports and periodicals of Western Pentecostals and their missionaries. These documents usually aimed to bolster financial and prayer support in North America and Europe. Therefore, the reports were mostly biased in favour of the missionaries than the native workers. This history was understood and compiled from written sources only, without retrieving oral traditions from those who were still alive and remembered the past. Many of the mistakes were committed early on during Western Pentecostal missions in Africa, China, India and elsewhere. These mistakes were partly the result of cultural and social insensitivities by the missionaries, and in some cases, there was blatant racism. The Pentecostal missionaries were obsessed with their task of bringing 'light' to 'darkness', as they frequently referred in their newsletters to the indigenous people as the heathens. In addition, they were slow to recognize national leadership when it arose with creative alternatives to Western forms of Pentecostalism (Anderson 2004:5).

## **2.5 THE PENTECOSTAL WORLDVIEW AND PARTICIPATION IN SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

### **2.5.1 The Pentecostal worldviews.**

While it is difficult to define the Pentecostal worldviews, there are notable features that embody Pentecostal thinking. The three most salient New African Pentecostal



worldviews in South Africa are dualistic ontology, an apocalyptic worldview, and a pessimistic worldview.

### **Dualistic ontology**

This feature of the Pentecostal worldview makes a sharp dichotomy between the present reality in which we live and the spiritual reality. The present reality is viewed as a place of struggle between the spiritual forces of good and evil. In this sense, Satan is understood as the ultimate source of all human evil, which includes human suffering. Therefore, the adherents of Pentecostalism perceive their Christian vocation as God's calling to separate themselves from the world, and to live a holy life in which they will not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. This is a life where righteousness will have no fellowship with unrighteousness, and light will have no communion with darkness. This results in Pentecostals being averse to most forms of involvement in social activities, except when it is motivated by an underlying desire to convert unbelievers to Pentecostalism. In this way, social involvement is often unconsciously or consciously utilised as bait within a gospel marketing strategy. Consequently, such a dualistic worldview appears to have prevented Pentecostals from contributing adequately to democratisation and the social cohesion process in post-apartheid South Africa. Corresponding to this dualistic worldview is the Pentecostal understanding of citizenship. In this regard, there is a dichotomy between their national citizenship and heavenly citizenship. Some do not even see themselves as citizens of their particular nations but describe themselves as aliens or foreigners whose citizenship is in heaven (Kaunda 2015:119-120).

### **Apocalyptic worldview**

The second feature of Pentecostal ontology is that it is apocalyptic. Despite the various beliefs held by different Pentecostals about eschatology, they nevertheless share a fundamental conviction of the imminent damnation or destruction of the present reality. They believe that the advent of Jesus Christ will usher in a new world order, which is different from the present world. Therefore, the perception of the present reality as being transient, shapes and reinforces the church's sense of political engagement. This belief is based on the understanding that Christians live for the future, while sinners live for the present evil world. Therefore, the conviction that the present reality

is destined for destruction, results in people being apathetic to socio-political activities. They no longer see themselves as part of that reality, nor do they see its activities as valuable and beneficial (Kaunda 2015:120-121).

However, recent studies show that Pentecostalism is no longer a world-rejecting movement. Rather, it calls for embracing the world and seeking ways to change it by encouraging members to be engaged in the public sphere. This engagement can be done through evangelism, taking up leadership in all aspects of civic and economic life and building communities as safe and secure environments. However, as a result of inconsistent admonition regarding involvement in socio-political activities, this involvement takes the form of personal initiatives which are motivated by Pentecostal values and too often do not impact significantly on all levels of society. These seemingly apolitical and socially unconcerned beliefs and practices have serious political implications since they promote social cohesion for its members but undermine it in political and other public spheres (Kaunda 2015:121).

### **Pessimistic worldview**

Pentecostal ontology is seen as pessimistic because it rejects the present world in favour of the coming world. This perspective is especially true for Classical Pentecostals who are essentially premillennialists. However, many New African Pentecostal churches are world-affirming postmillennialists. This being the case, the weakness of these churches is that while they represent coherent ideological alternatives to premillennialism, they do not engage in rational socio-political analysis to develop strategies for promoting social cohesion beyond their ecclesiastical corners (Kaunda 2015:121).

### **2.5.2 Pentecostals and political engagement**

According to Gooren (2004:208), Pentecostalism has in so many cases become a supporter of reactionary politics, not only in the USA but in countries like Guatemala, Chile and South Africa. Although Pentecostalism was somewhat an expression of social protest, born of radical social discontent, as it became institutionalised it gradually withdrew from the social struggle. As such, most Pentecostals keep a safe distance from politics, except for a few progressive Pentecostal groups in Chile and Guatemala. While some Pentecostal leaders get involved in politics to morally reform

their country, they are rarely successful. For instance, Jorge Serrano, a Neo-Pentecostal leader was accused of corruption and was ridiculed in Guatemala after his presidential *coup d'état* failed. Subsequently, he had to flee the country.

While some scholars argue that many Pentecostals emphasise involvement in all aspects of national life as a critical site for propagating their beliefs and practices, others see ambiguity in the theological orientation of the movement. Scholars who argue that the movement is this-worldly oriented, however, refer to the personal involvement of individual Pentecostal members, which is not often done in the name of any denomination (Kaunda 2015:118).

### **Pentecostals and political engagement in South Africa**

In its initial stages, Pentecostalism in South Africa, like global Pentecostalism was framed in the belief of being 'born again'. This was equated with being a 'new creation' and consequently demanded that its adherents adopt a moral code and spiritual life of constantly striving to uphold a newfound religious identity. On one hand, this was coupled with subverting of non-Christian religious traditions, African cultural heritage and national identities. On the other hand, it promoted personal piety, discipline and honesty. It discouraged excessive spending of money while encouraging entrepreneurship. This worldview has shaped the members' empirical attitudes towards political activity. For many Pentecostals in South Africa, politics was initially part of the taboo, as they believed that "light and darkness had nothing in common." They believed that being empowered by the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with society. Pentecostalism in South Africa seems to be positioned between opposing realities, that is, political engagement or disengagement (Kaunda 2015:116-117).

Pentecostalism in South Africa perceives itself in terms of a missionary and evangelistic vocation to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. This process also involves a spiritual struggle against 'principalities and powers', which often included the state and public spheres. According to the worldview of many South African Pentecostals, power and empowerment of the Spirit are the diametric opposite of the power and power structures of the world (Kaunda 2015:118).

According to Kaunda (2015:118), during apartheid, many Pentecostals such as Reverend Nicholas Bhengu saw involvement in political struggle as "sinful" or even

contrary to God's plans and thus counterproductive. However, some Africans in Pentecostal circles such as the Reverend Frank Chikane engaged in the political struggle against apartheid. However, this was done at an individual level. That being the case, many Pentecostal adherents in post-apartheid South Africa are notoriously averse to talking about or occupying their minds with politics. Rather, most of them prefer to emphasise spiritual rather than social and political convictions.

In South Africa presently, Pentecostal congregations are encouraged to vote in national and municipal elections. However, in general, politics is not discussed or engaged with in their churches. During election time churches give political parties a platform to address their congregations in the runup to both elections, but congregational leaders seldom suggest to their congregations which party to vote for. In most cases, it is in the area of prayer for the nation, as well as civic engagement that churches show the most consistent engagement with a wider political agenda. In addition, Christians are encouraged to be in positions of leadership in the country to promote the moral regeneration of the country and its leadership. Most churches preach that the real emotional and material regeneration of South Africa would only begin when the family structure was repaired in society (Frahm-Arp 2018:5).

## **2.6 DOCTRINAL TENETS, RITUALS AND PRACTICES OF PENTECOSTAL BELIEF**

While the global picture of Pentecostalism reveals that there are many and varied denominations of the faith, it has a specific set of doctrinal tenets, rituals, and practices. Among the many doctrines, practices and tenets are salvation, baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy, blessing and soul-winning (Mashau 2013:5; Mbe 2002:362; Ma & Ma 2010:154-161).

### **Salvation**

One of the basic tenets in Pentecostal teaching is salvation which is earned by faith in Christ. Believing in Jesus Christ is essential for one to receive salvation and inherit eternal life. The message of salvation emphasises being born again or regenerated through the power of the Holy Spirit. Central to Pentecostal preaching is the call to repent, believe and accept Christ as a personal Saviour. All their major evangelistic

crusades in Africa and elsewhere in the world are geared toward calling unbelievers to come and receive Christ and surrender their lives to him (Mashau 2013:5).

Pentecostalism, as a Christianity of the "born-again preachers", is characterised by a strict morality manifested in their zero tolerance for the use of alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, and drugs, as well as engagement in adultery, violence and theft. These are regarded as sinful and inappropriate in the life of a believer. These negative injunctions are balanced with clear demands for a new morality, usually communicated in an atmosphere of religious excitement and emotionalism. The believer must manifest a personal life of holiness and modesty (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:392; Mbe 2002: 362).

### **The baptism in the Spirit**

From a Pentecostal point of view, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a life-transforming event after conversion. It is one of the central doctrines of Pentecostalism. It can therefore be said that baptism in the Spirit best characterises Pentecostals. As a result, this event is frequently reflected in Pentecostal preaching. It is believed that the baptism in the Holy Spirit makes one truly Pentecostal. Therefore, at the end of many sermons, congregants are admonished to seek this experience. The prevailing assumption among Pentecostals is that from the baptism in the Spirit, many other spiritual experiences flow, for instance speaking in tongues, physical healing, answers to prayers, various kinds of miracles, and a call to ministry, especially for evangelism. In many ways, the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit is a defining moment in a Pentecostal's life. Even if a sermon has little to do with this particular topic, it is not unusual for the preacher to conclude his or her sermon by inviting people to pray for baptism in the Spirit. This invitation also includes 'old timers' wanting to experience the refilling of the Spirit (Ma & Ma 2010:154).

Pentecostals believe strongly that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a sequel to what occurred on the day of Pentecost amongst the early disciples of Jesus, as recorded in Acts 2:17–18. They believe that it is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples that made them speak in tongues on the day of Pentecost. On this day Peter quoted the Book of the prophet Joel, where Joel had predicted the outpouring of the Spirit in the last days. Besides this outpouring of the Spirit as a constitution of a new people of

God (Jews and Gentiles), it also meant breaking barriers on religious, cultural, and social fronts (Quayesi-Amakye 2016:76).

Pentecostals believe that the baptism of the Spirit was not only meant for the early disciples but that it is a recurring phenomenon relevant to present-day Christians. They believe that the baptism of the Spirit is not the final goal in a Christian's life. Rather, it is the beginning of a new kind of life in Christ. This baptism of the Spirit is accompanied by the gifts of the Spirit such as discernment of error, power over Satanic influences, healing, working of miracles and wisdom (Mbe 2002: 361-362).

In their early stages, Pentecostal churches were overtly uncompromising and dogmatic on speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*) as the imperative sign of Spirit baptism among believers. It was also believed that salvation was impossible or at best not complete without speaking in tongues. In addition, Pentecostals have always believed in the continuous activeness of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. The Spirit's active presence is manifested after a believer will have received the Spirit baptism. Early Pentecostals mistook *glossolalia* for *xenoglossia* (real languages previously unknown to the recipient). This emanated from the teaching of Charles F. Parham, who is believed to be the formulator of tongues as the biblical evidence of Spirit baptism (Quayesi-Amakye 2016:76).

Furthermore, flowing from the text in Acts 1:8, it is understood that apart from regeneration, the baptism of the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for service. Therefore, the baptism of the Spirit is often viewed as an essential requirement for ministry (Ma & Ma 2010:159).

### **Speaking in Tongues**

For Pentecostals, the significance of speaking in tongues is not only the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12 speaking in tongues is seen as the gift (charisma) of tongues or the prayer language. In the setting of the Corinthian church, *glossolalia* occurred in a settled congregation, and it required the accompanying gift of interpretation. Interpretation served to enhance and extend the usefulness of speaking in tongues beyond the speaker. Often during a time of reflection after a sermon, a congregant may speak in tongues publicly. This is not only regarded as a sign of the baptism in the Spirit but is believed to be the manifestation

of the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:7). Through this gift, and the accompanying interpretation, the congregation expects God to give an 'utterance' for the edification of the church. In addition, these tongues and their interpretation reaffirm the word of God which would have been preached. Furthermore, tongues are also used as a private prayer language. It is argued that the 'groaning' of the Spirit in Romans 8:26-27 refers to speaking in tongues in private prayer (1Corinthians 14:14) (Ma & Ma 2010:158-160).

## **Healing**

Throughout the Bible, healing is frequently used to manifest the presence, compassion and power of God. This is a sign that although God is transcendental, he becomes a God who is immanent in specific human needs, such as sickness and weakness. Healing, therefore, is the manifestation of the supreme God among his people. As shown in 1Corinthians 14:9 healing is one of many gifts which are intended to edify the church. Healing is probably the most common manifestation of God's power among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Therefore, Pentecostal workers freely exercise the spiritual gift of healing in worship services and informal fellowships. Healing does not only reinforce the reality of God as preached in the sermons but also affirms that God is also a God who cares for the needs of his people. Furthermore, Pentecostals understand that often demons cause physical and mental disorders and sicknesses. Therefore, exorcism is a regular part of Pentecostal worship, during and after preaching (Ma & Ma 2010:156-158).

Pentecostals believe that physical illness should be treated through spiritual means. This is accomplished by the laying on of hands on the sick and praying for them. Unlike other denominations, Pentecostalism with its faith healing doctrine provides a solution to the problem of ill health, thereby attracting many people. Many people have been persuaded to join the Pentecostal faith because of their ill health or that of a relative (Mbe 2002: 362).

## **Prophecy**

Like traditional Christianity, Pentecostalism shares a basic theological belief in the primacy of the written word as God's revelation. However, Pentecostals also believe in God's direct communication through various other ways such as prophecy. While



an utterance can be given in tongues with corresponding interpretations, the gift of prophecy functions in a similar way. However, it can come through other means such as visions, audible messages and dreams. In Pentecostal worship, prophecy is often a declaration spontaneously given to the congregation in a public setting for edification (1 Corinthians 14:14-20). In the Bible, there is ample evidence that prophecy is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. For example, the Book of Acts records that after being baptised in the Holy Spirit, people spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 8). In addition, Peter, by the Spirit foretold the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10) (Ma & Ma 2010:161).

As manifested in the Book of Acts, Pentecostals and Charismatics experience the unfolding of God's will through dreams, visions, or personal messages, though God's written revelation functions as a basic truth. However, in a real-life setting, many situations require decisions which have nothing to do with ethical or Christian principles. In these instances, 'direct revelation' is sought, and the word gifts, such as prophecy, find their place. Paul notes that prophecy is given for 'strengthening, encouragement and comfort' (1 Corinthians 14:4). In many cases, a prophecy often comes during the post-proclamation prayer to reinforce the message just proclaimed. In the case of prophecy, the congregation is admonished to weigh carefully what is said (1 Corinthians 14:29) (Ma & Ma 2010:161).

## **Blessing**

While there is no significant difference between the Pentecostal understanding of blessing and that of traditional Christianity, two distinct ways can be identified for Pentecostals. First, Pentecostals believe that God blesses them here and now. Second, they believe that God does not only bless the spiritual, but also the physical, material and relational dimensions of human life. The message of blessing is based on God's character of faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22), mercy, dependability (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 89:8; 1Thessalonians 5:23-24), goodness (Psalms 100:5) and love. The message about God's character encourages his people to anticipate God's blessings. Pentecostals believe that blessings are given when they trust God and earnestly seek out his blessings. In addition, many Christians believe in giving as a way of receiving God's blessings (Ma & Ma 2010:161-162).



## **Soul-winning**

Based on Acts 1:8, Pentecostals believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is God's empowerment for witnessing. In other words, mission is the very reason for Pentecostal existence. That is why preaching on the baptism in the Spirit is critical in Pentecostal churches because it is linked to the church's mission. Dynamic and meaningful witnessing becomes possible only after one is empowered by the Spirit. In churches like Yoido Full Gospel Church in Korea, Christians are challenged and motivated to witness Christ to their neighbours. In this way soul-winning has been consistent in preaching. This emphasis on the preaching and practice of soul-winning leads to church growth (Ma & Ma 2010:154-155).

## **'Spirit-filled' worship**

According to Alvarado (2012:139), Pentecostal faith and Pentecostal worship are often described with the term 'Spirit-filled'. The criterion for Spirit-filled Christian worship refers to the unique elements of Pentecostal spirituality and the traditions that gave birth to it. Pentecostal spirituality is rooted in the Wesleyan holiness tradition and has produced worship practices that are inherently pneumatological.

In describing different forms of worship Basden (1999:76-87) mentions that Praise and Worship are also loosely referred to as Pentecostal Worship. Presently it is known as Contemporary Praise and Worship, and it describes an upbeat, loud informal service in which the congregants seek the immediate presence and manifestation of God. This style manifests overt Charismatic tendencies such as speaking in tongues and exorcising demons. Its purpose is to lead the congregation to worship God based on the biblical model of Psalms 150. The main features of the Praise and Worship style are music (sometimes led by the worship team), Scripture reading, offering and sermon. Ordinances such as the Lord's supper are observed monthly or quarterly depending on each church's tradition. The strengths of this style are its celebratory mood, participation and intimacy with God. However, this style is criticised for its emotionalism which seems to lead to entertainment, where zeal is not based on knowledge.

Among the tenets of Pentecostal worship are, passionate praise, emotional release, and spiritual gifts in operation. All these elements make the expression of worship a

transformative, vibrant, and moving encounter with the divine. Included in these tenets, is an ethic of play or celebration, which is the interchange of 'free worship' and 'spontaneity' within the structure or rules. In this case, the Spirit supplies the freedom for unscripted expression while the tradition of the community gives the structure for the worship. This interplay and exchange of free worship within rules characterises Pentecostal worship and is the style and form by which Pentecostals have come to live their lives. This way of worship engages the Pentecostal hermeneutic, worldview, ecclesiology, and eschatology. This worship involves a dynamic and vibrant relationship, not with a historical saviour, but rather with a living Lord (Alvarado (2012:139)).

Asamoah-Gyadu (2007:392) describes Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity as a religion of the heart. Therefore, worship in these movements and churches is characterised in the main by spontaneity and pneumatic manifestations. The lively singing, and dancing, are accompanied by the opportunity of extemporaneous prayers and speaking in tongues, interpretation and prophecy (Mbe 2002: 362).

Furthermore, the other style of worship found among Pentecostals is the Revivalist worship. This style started at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is characterised by exuberance, zeal and aggressive preaching to turn the lost souls to God. The main purpose of this style is evangelising the lost. It has its biblical model in Acts 2 when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. In addition, it hearkens to Paul's admonition to Timothy to preach the word and be prepared in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2). The current expressions of the revivalist worship are music, Scripture reading and offering, sermon and observance of some ordinances. Music themes in revivalist worship include revival, prayer and heaven. The strengths of this style are that its exuberance invites worshippers to participate, sermons challenge the will, and it also places priority on the new birth. However, one of the downsides of this style is its imbalance between kerygma and Didache. That is, there is more emphasis on proclaiming the gospel than on teaching and grounding the worshippers in the faith (Basden 1999:66-75).

## **2.7 THE PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTIC**

According to Gabaitse (2015:3-4) & Alvarado (2012:139), the Pentecostal hermeneutic has two forms: the articulated Pentecostal hermeneutic and the

unarticulated Pentecostal hermeneutic. The articulated Pentecostal hermeneutic refers to an academic exercise of reading and interpreting the Bible. This hermeneutic arose because scholars of Pentecostalism such as Christopher Thomas were not satisfied with a system of interpretation that was heavily oriented towards rationalism and had little room for the role of the Holy Spirit. In addition, this hermeneutic takes the principles of critical scholarship and biblical interpretation seriously, such as the tridactic model of interpretation consisting of Scripture, Spirit and Community. Although the hermeneutic is Pentecostal, the Bible is read and interpreted critically, taking into consideration the context in which it was produced and the culture of the time, among other things.

On the other hand, unarticulated Pentecostal hermeneutic is practised, acted and performed in the churches as members are engaged in shaping and developing this hermeneutic. It consists of the often-unconscious hermeneutical strategies used by the community as they participate in activities such as preaching, prayers, Bible studies, hymns and testimonies. This hermeneutic is characterised by taking and understanding the Bible at face value since it is not concerned with the contexts in which the Bible was produced (Gabaitse 2015:4).

According to Gabaitse (2015:4-5), there are three essential aspects of the Pentecostal hermeneutic: First is, literal interpretations of the Bible; second, proof-texting of the Bible, and third Pentecostal doctrine of the Trinity.

### **Literal Readings of the Bible**

This is one of the most dominant models of biblical interpretation in Pentecostal churches. A literal reading of the Bible does not take the historical context of texts seriously. The Bible is read in the present to mean what it means (Gabaitse 2015:5). Biblical literalism encompasses a range of theological doctrines, among which are: First, Biblical authority. Since conservative Protestants regard the Bible as the word of God, it has to be taken literally. Its authority deserves and commands unconditional obedience. The second is Biblical inerrancy. This is the affirmation that the Bible is inerrant in its entirety, and it is free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit. Consequently, it has to be taken literally. These two concepts form the cornerstones of literalism as an aspect of Pentecostal hermeneutic (Gabaitse 2015:5).

Biblical literalism is a colloquial term used primarily to describe people's beliefs, values, and attendant practices surrounding the Bible. It has the following as some of its key aspects (Juzwik 2014:337):

- It focuses on biblical interpretation by emphasising the content of a passage as opposed to how the passage is crafted or how it relates to other passages.
- It privileges common-sense meanings of the biblical text and relegates figurative language in the biblical text to special genres (for example, parable or poetry).
- It sees God, rather than humans, as the true author of the biblical text.
- It treats certain sections of the biblical text as fundamental to interpreting the entire text as well as other texts.
- It values the written text of the Bible over spoken words and lived experiences.
- It frequently and indiscriminately quotes and cites foundational biblical passages.
- It separates exegesis, interpretation, and application in biblical interpretation, for example, readers extract the message of a passage first and then figure out how to apply it to their lives (Juzwik 2014:337).

Biblical literalism can be traced back to American evangelicalism. Although the definition of the term “evangelical” is contested and complicated, it can be said to refer to those individuals who believe that the Bible is authoritative; claim a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (that is, they are saved or born again); and believe that faith involves activism and transformation of lives. Therefore, believing in the authority of the biblical text appears to take pre-eminence in this definition. Scholars generally seem to see it as the most important criterion for defining an American evangelical. Biblical literalism is a view that widely pervades discussions about evangelical biblicism (that is, a historically shaped interpretive tradition mediated by a complex set of literate practices and textual ideologies that surround the Bible for American evangelicals). In the nineteenth century, American evangelicals revered the Bible. They viewed it as a text articulating a divinely authored message and having a comprehensive structure of universal meaning. It was also viewed as a text, which provides a way for God to direct and interpret their own lives (Juzwik 2014:336-339).

Furthermore, biblical literalism can be said to have its roots in the Reformation doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* (that the Bible reveals all matters of faith and practice necessary for salvation). This doctrine took shape in Martin Luther's Reformed theology. *Sola*

*Scriptura* insists on privileging the written word of Scripture as the only source of God's truth rather than locating religious authority in the hands of priests and church traditions, as in the Catholic Church tradition (Juzwik 2014:339).

### **Proof-Texting**

This refers to the use and harmonising of a few biblical texts to support one argument, without considering how those texts relate to the Bible as a whole. As such, doctrines are supported, proven and disproven by using stand-alone biblical verses. The problem with proof-texting is that it ignores the principle of context which demands that the cultural contexts of the Bible be taken into consideration. According to the principle of context, the Bible should be read, understood and interpreted by taking into consideration that it was produced within a particular cultural context very different from contemporary contexts. In addition, proof-texting ignores the fact that Bible stories are connected and can never be understood as stand-alone pieces (Gabaitse 2015:6).

### **Pentecostal doctrine of the Trinity**

According to Gabaitse (2015:8), most Pentecostals believe that God has established a chain of command, which is visible even within the Trinity. They argue that within the Trinity, God the Son is seen to be subordinate to God the Father. The relationship of God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit is ordered hierarchically, with God the Father at the top of the hierarchy, followed by Jesus and then the Holy Spirit. Gabaitse argues further that Pentecostals who believe in the hierarchy within the Trinity advocate hierarchy between people, and specifically between men and women, where men occupy a high status followed by women and children.

### **Minimal emphasis on historical-critical textual exegesis**

The Pentecostal hermeneutic does not emphasise a historical-critical textual exegesis but rather focuses on the immediate meaning of a text. Pentecostal preaching requires a theory and a method of hermeneutics that facilitate a 're-experiencing' of the biblical text while maintaining respect for the text within its historical context. Contemporary Pentecostals agree that while exegesis including a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context is necessary, it should, however, not minimise the

influence of the Spirit. This emanates from their belief that the Bible is not automatically the word of God but only becomes God's word when the life-giving power of the Spirit enlivens and transmits it, resulting in the transformation of human life (Nel 2017:294-295).

### **The Pentecostal hermeneutic of experience**

Kgatle & Mofokeng (2019:2) define the 'Pentecostal hermeneutic of experience' as the hermeneutic in which the Holy Spirit is involved in the interpretation of the Scriptures. This hermeneutic asserts that when the Holy Spirit is involved, there shall be a proper interpretation of the Scripture. The reason for this is that Pentecostals are inclined to the work of the Holy Spirit in almost everything they do. As such, this hermeneutic of experience makes the Pentecostal community a distinct, coherent narrative tradition within Christianity, bound together by their Charismatic experiences and common story. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit, who did great works in the life of Christ, like his resurrection, as well as other powerful works by the Apostles in the Book of Acts, lives in them. The same Holy Spirit can give them revelations today. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit can draw to their attention relevant Scriptural passages that will help them deal with contextual challenges in their lives. Hence, many Pentecostal preachers do not even see a need to go through theological training because the Holy Spirit is the revelatory agent between the Bible and its reader.

A Pentecostal hermeneutic of experience does not necessarily dismiss a scientific inquisition of Scriptures, but rather places the role and work of the Holy Spirit above the zeal for scientific knowledge. The Pentecostal hermeneutic of experience recognises the Bible as we have it today as the word of God, which one can read and understand only through the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, fellowship with God through Scripture reading, prayer, worship and other activities is pivotal in Pentecostalism as they enhance the knowledge about God found in the Bible. While a Pentecostal hermeneutic as the work of the Holy Spirit makes it distinct from other hermeneutics, several problems arise, as exemplified in the following:

- Scriptures are quoted or used out of context for a pastor or prophet to drive his or her agenda.
- The word spoken by a prophet is taken as the final word on one hand but abusing the listeners or believers on the other.

- An average Pentecostal cares little about hermeneutics. He or she would be quick to agree that it is by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that a particular religious experience is caused and makes sense (Kgatle & Mofokeng 2019:2).

Due to the Pentecostal hermeneutic of experience, there are some challenges in African Pentecostal Christianity (APC). These challenges include the abuse of Scriptures, prophecy and contradictions in experienced and revealed truth as inspired by the Holy Spirit. The actions of Pastors Lesego Daniel of Rabboni Centre Ministries and Lethebo Rabalago of Mount Zion General Assembly, illustrate the challenges facing APCs. Both these ministers attribute their actions of feeding congregants with grass and spraying them with an insecticide, respectively, to the instruction of the Holy Spirit. This is attributed to the egoism central to the hermeneutics of Charismatic Christianity in South Africa. By 'Charismatic Christianity', reference is made to the movement in which the pentecostalisation of mainline churches has, in some instances resulted in the establishment of independent congregations often founded by sometimes theologically untrained leaders, or those who did some training with American-based or related Bible schools (cf. Kgatle & Mofokeng 2019:1).

## **2.8 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP**

Gender equality and the role of women in religion have over the years received vast authorship. However, this study does not intend to discuss this topic at length but will briefly explore the role of women in Pentecostal worship, to the extent that it is relevant to this study.

From the early period, women's roles have been childbearing and child-rearing, as well as being responsible for other domestic chores. In most cases, men were breadwinners, with women not contributing to the household income. Since people cannot be completely dissociated from their cultures, this trend continued into the Church (Yemisi & Dada 2015:245). From a religious perspective, women's subordination to men has several roots. First, are the Old Testament teachings which did not give women any responsibility in worship. Second, are the teachings of the early Church Fathers which were limiting to women's roles. Third is that the writers and scholars of the thirteenth century were influenced by the early Church Fathers such as St. Augustine, who did not support the ordination of women in the Church



because he regarded them as less spiritual (Yemisi & Dada 2015: 245-246; cf. Mogoane 2018:36). In addition, in the histories of religions, the voice of women is rarely heard, due to the patriarchal dispositions of societies in which these religions emerged. Eventually, these patriarchal dispositions stifle some of the changes in the status of women (Klingorová & Havlíček 2015:3).

During the time of Jesus, however, the status of women was better than in the Old Testament. Their presence in Jesus' ministry showed that he recognised them. Jesus was always kind to them even if he faced opposition in that regard. Then came the time of the Apostle Paul. While Paul is considered controversial because of his writings about women, there is also a view that he might not have limited women's status but was writing according to the status of women in his time (Yemisi & Dada 2015:246; cf. Mogoane 2018:37).

In the contemporary church, women's roles have changed from those of subordinates to those of leadership. This is to some extent attributed to the advent of Pentecostalism. Furthermore, the reinterpretation of biblical passages dealing with the role of women has changed and consequently led to the changing status of women in the Church (Yemisi & Dada 2015:247; Gabaitse 2015:2-3). However, recent studies indicate that while the Pentecostal movement is potentially a liberating space, it still has ambivalent attitudes towards women; and that the Church remains a space which subjugates women, even as it offers them unique permission to speak. (Gabaitse (2015:2; cf. Mogoane 2018:37).

### **Pentecostal gender ideology**

Pentecostal gender ideology is based on the understanding of Pentecostal theology of democratisation of charisma. This is based on the biblical accounts of the work of the Holy Spirit, especially what took place in the early Church (on the day of Pentecost). On this day both men and women were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues. This is believed to be something that can now take place in the contemporary Church. Pentecostal gender ideology is based on this non-discriminatory account of Pentecost. This liberative element led to notions like universal priesthood and prophethood of all believers. Consequently, the only qualification needed for people to serve in the church is the testimony of a call and



evidence of a spiritual gift. It is believed that the Holy Spirit has the absolute authority to choose anyone (Migwi 2016:16; cf. Mogoane 2018:39).

However, Gabaitse (2015:2-3) posits an argument regarding the ambivalence of Pentecostalism towards women. She mentions that Pentecostalism has been celebrated as a liberating space for women as it allows them to preach. That being the case, Pentecostalism has not paid sufficient attention to the patriarchal tendencies in general, which support and uphold male power, and the oppressive interpretative practices purported to be biblical doctrine derived from texts such as Ephesians 5:22-6:4. Studies indicate that exclusion exists along gender lines within the Pentecostal movement in Africa, Asia, and in the West. Women and men do not occupy the same status in Pentecostal churches. The leadership model employed by Pentecostal churches has also been described as authoritarian and hierarchical, promoting male authority and hierarchical relationships with women and children at the bottom (cf. Mogoane 2018:40).

In the AOG (BTG), preaching is one of the roles in which women make less impact in church worship. In addition, women are not being appointed to congregational leadership positions and as pastors. Women do not preach in combined congregational services. Their roles are limited only to preaching in the women's ministry (Mogoane 2018:132). While women are allowed to participate in some areas of worship in the AOG (BTG), the fundamental issues of patriarchy and gender equality concerning preaching, ordination of pastors, as well as appointment into leadership positions of the whole church still need to be addressed (Mogoane 2018:137).

However, the words of Margaret Y. Macdonald are worth noting when advocating for change in women's roles in the church: "It is high time the church, which claims to embody, his [Jesus] good news to the world, stops betraying its own essential heritage of absolute equality..." (MacDonald 2006:140; cf. Mogoane 2018:137).

Furthermore, Gabaitse's words give hope when she states: "Finally, the marginalisation and exclusion of women is inimical to the true spirit of Pentecostalism for the simple reason that the Holy Spirit if listened to, is able to destabilise and threaten patriarchal ideology and prerogatives. This can happen only if the Pentecostal church were to be open to the change and transformation that the Holy Spirit can usher and effect. However, even if the Pentecostal church is not open to embrace women

into the centre, the Holy Spirit will continue to critique, unsettle and act against the Pentecostal church for preaching equality between men and women, while in reality they marginalise women and elevate the status of men through an uncritical use and interpretation of the Bible” (Gabaitse 2015:11).

## **2.9 THE ECONOMIC MESSAGE OF PENTECOSTALS AND THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL**

### **2.9.1 The economic message of Pentecostals**

The economic message of Pentecostals is motivated by two doctrinal alternatives. This usually emanates from situations where an individual or a group is deprived of certain material needs such as education, food or money. The first alternative is the implementation of a doctrine in which some or all of the material possessions as well as health, are considered meaningless or of low value. The second alternative is the implementation of religious doctrines through which wealth and health are considered important and can be acquired (Mbe 2002: 368-369).

These two alternatives create a doctrinal dichotomy regarding the economic message for Pentecostal churches. The first alternative makes them believe that earthly things or struggles are unimportant. The second alternative motivates them to argue that God provides a solution to every problem depending on the faith of the individual or the collective. From a Cameroonian perspective, studies show that the second alternative is the more popular among the new wave of Pentecostal groups. Early Pentecostal groups such as The Apostolic Church and the Full Gospel Church had placed their emphasis on the first alternative. This message of the first alternative was grounded on Bible verses such as “Blessed are the poor ...” (Matthew 5:6). This approach was adopted because of the economic crisis. In addition, during this time churches received donations from abroad and from the government. Therefore, it was not necessary to ask for donations from their members, to carry out mission work (Mbe 2002: 369).

The first alternative was also based on strict ethical provisions of the Bible. From this understanding, a believer, especially women were expected to dress modestly, avoiding the use of make-up and expensive clothing. The biblical citation: “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom

of God” was frequently used to defend this position and to discourage the accumulation of wealth. This Pentecostal view made poverty and suffering more tolerable and the promise of justice and redress was expected in the afterlife (Mbe 2002: 369).

However, because of the economic crisis in the country, and with less financial support from abroad and from the government, Pentecostals changed their approach to the Second alternative. Bible verses, which alluded to the idea that Jesus had come to bring abundant life and prosperity to believers were frequently made use of in sermons. People were taught to give for the spread of the Kingdom of God (Mbe 2002: 369).

This second doctrinal alternative adopts a method whereby Pentecostals believe they can have possession of whatever they want. This belief is based on prosperity theology, which teaches that the spiritual and material fortunes of a believer are dependent on faith and on how much he/she gives spiritually and materially to God or his representatives. Texts such as Mark 11:23, Deuteronomy 20:30, and Philippians 4:19 are frequently used in support of this message. The message underpinning this approach is that you prosper by planting a seed in faith, and in return, God will meet all your needs (Mbe 2002: 369).

### **2.9.2 The prosperity gospel**

Pentecostal and Charismatic preachers in America and elsewhere in the world have developed a theology of affluence called prosperity gospel. In addition called faith gospel, or the health and wealth gospel, this gospel proclaims that a Christian is already healthy and wealthy, by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. All that this Christian must do is claim possession of this health and wealth by faith. The description of this gospel has three distinct elements namely, faith, wealth and health. It is through the believer’s faith that access to wealth and health is unlocked. In addition, according to this gospel, sickness and poverty are not ideal and therefore not acceptable among Christians. At the heart of this gospel is the ‘name it’ and ‘claim it’ syndrome which teaches that all resources are there for people to claim them (Mashau & Kgatle 2019:2).

The roots of the prosperity gospel are in the teaching of Essek William Kenyon (1867–1948), a Baptist, who was not strictly a Pentecostal. Kenyon was converted at age seventeen and began pastoring at the age of nineteen years. Sometime later, he was ordained by Freewill Baptists and began pastoring in Baptist circles. Preachers such as Oral Roberts and Kenneth Hagin embraced Kenyon’s doctrine. Oral Roberts founded Oral Roberts University, while Kenneth Hagin became the founder of The Word of Faith movement. Hagin influenced Kenneth Copeland who subsequently influenced men like Creflo Dollar. When Kenneth Hagin’s successors went to extremes in their prosperity views Hagin sought a corrective. He then published a book “The Midas Touch: A Balanced Approach to Biblical Prosperity.” From Oral Roberts University came preachers such as Joel Osteen of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, the largest church in the United States of America (cf. Straub 2016: 216-217). Besides Creflo Dollar and Joel Osteen, other preachers said to be chief proponents of the American version of the prosperity gospel include Robert Tilton (Mashau & Kgatle 2019:2).

The prosperity gospel aims to help people improve the quality of their lives by teaching them various strategies, which include the importance of self-discipline, as well as emotional and psychological wellbeing (Frahm-Arp 2018:4). Furthermore, the prosperity theology is not static. For instance, in the 2000s the Word of Faith teaching in the Philippines expanded to include “Kingdom Theology.” The notion of Kingdom Theology taught that even a nation could also claim God’s blessings if its leaders and people were morally good and not corrupt. This implies that God’s blessing of prosperity is not limited to individuals, but also adds a dynamic of sanctification to the prosperity theology (Frahm-Arp 2018:3).

Pentecostal preachers used the prosperity message as a means of gaining funds and it was very successful. Because of this message, financial resources were made available to meet the objectives of evangelisation and building media empires and churches (Mbe 2002: 369). The underpinning theology of this gospel is the theology of affluence. Members are encouraged to give to receive God’s blessings. However, the downside thereof is that this gospel tends to give birth to the gospel of ‘greed and consumption’ (Mashau & Kgatle 2019:2).

## **The prosperity gospel in Africa**

In Africa, the prosperity gospel found fertile soil in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian churches. Historically, the prosperity gospel on African soil spread widely in the 1980s. Currently, this doctrine is associated with many of Africa's fastest-growing churches such as the Rhema churches of South Africa and Zimbabwe, Andrew Wutawanashe's Family Church, Benson Idahosa's Church of God Mission International in Nigeria and many others (Mashau & Kgatle 2019:2). Furthermore, in Africa the prosperity theology is popular with Pentecostal leaders like Handel Leslie of Uganda, Duncan William of Ghana and Reverend Billy Lubansa of Cameroon (Mbe 2002: 369).

The prosperity gospel has spread in Africa, not only among the Pentecostals but also with the mainline churches. This is because many Pentecostal pastors received their training from the Bible colleges run by the prosperity preachers in America. This theology is disseminated through literature, Bible schools, and preaching during crusades or at churches. The advantage of this gospel to church leaders is that it provides revenue through which they can survive economic crises (Mbe 2002: 369).

Some characteristics of the prosperity gospel in the post-colonial era can be cited as the following: First, it is the gospel of affluence. This gospel boasts of some of Africa's richest religious leaders. For example, Nigerian pastor and Christian author David O. Oyedepo of the Living Faith Church Worldwide (Winners' Chapel), Nigerian pastor Temitope Balogun Joshua (TB Joshua) of The Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), Nigerian-born pastor Chris Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy, South African televangelist pastor Paseka Motsoeneng (Mboro) of Incredible Happenings, and South Africa-based Malawian prophet Shepherd Bushiri of the Enlightened Christian Gathering (ECG). The grass and petrol pastor, Lesego Daniel of Rabboni Centre Ministries is one of the emerging and controversial pastors in Tshwane (Mashau & Kgatle 2019:3).

Second, the prosperity gospel is paradoxically placed, because while it purports prosperity, it is thriving in the context of extreme poverty. The prosperity gospel shows an attempt to project a collective perception of victory in an environment of socio-economic and political decline. Third, it is anchored in the spirit of the 'name it, claim it' syndrome. The gospel of prosperity teaches that all resources for a prosperous life

are there for the people to claim. However, while it is African Christians who have embraced this message to continue to 'name it', it is their pastors who are 'claiming it' (Mashau & Kgatle 2019:3).

Fourth, it is highly commercialised. The prosperity gospel promotes a culture of commercialisation of the gospel. This leads to a culture of consumerism among unsuspecting followers. This phenomenon has caused serious challenges in South Africa such that the CRL Rights Commission began to investigate this aspect of African religiosity. Fifth, it is explicitly linked with 'deliverance' theology. This gospel blames sin and demonic powers when one fails to receive the promised prosperity. Sixth, it has gone virtual and viral. The growth of the prosperity gospel in Africa is fuelled by the use of media. Seventh, it is highly sensationalised. Many testimonies where adherents claim to have received their health and/or wealth are well recorded and publicised in both print and electronic media (Mashau & Kgatle 2019:3).

According to Frahm-Arp (2018:3), features of the prosperity gospel in Africa can be broadly outlined as:

- An attitude of hope for a positive future.
- An entrepreneurial attitude of "winning ways," which in Africa means doing away with family cultural practices which are deemed contrary to biblical teaching.
- The use of life improvement strategies that include an ethic of hard work or how to cope with life by engaging in continuous fervent prayer.
- Giving money to the church through consistent tithing and various ways of offering by sowing the "seed."
- Preacher-prophets having special powers to speak against and fight the "spirit of poverty."

### **The Prosperity gospel in South Africa**

Frahm-Arp (2018:4-5) describes three types of the prosperity gospel in South Africa: The "abilities prosperity," the "progress prosperity," and "miracle prosperity." The abilities prosperity focuses on getting believers to exercise and develop their abilities. This implies that anyone can achieve anything by aligning themselves with God's principles, claiming God's blessings, giving generously to the church, and working hard. Progress prosperity focuses on changing people's attitudes by emphasising the

idea that prosperity means progress. Church members are encouraged to see success, even in small things such as getting a new client for their business or passing an exam, as progress and a sign of prosperity. Miracle prosperity embraces the belief that spiritual growth determines material wealth. People achieve material wealth through victory in spiritual battles of prayer, driving out demons, and making personal sacrifices. This form of prosperity theology often includes practices of “positive confession” or “naming and claiming.” In these churches, wealth is achieved not necessarily through hard work and a strict moral code, but rather through God’s desire to bless people with miraculous wealth, as a result of their faith or by vanquishing the spiritual powers of evil that continually want to thwart God’s miracles (Frahm-Arp 2018:10).

## **2.10 STRENGTHS OF, AND CHALLENGES FACING PENTECOSTALISM**

### **2.10.1 Strengths of Pentecostalism**

Pentecostalism has several strengths. The first is oral liturgy. The major factor in the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism in the developing world is primarily its roots in the spirituality of nineteenth-century Afro-American slave religion rather than its doctrine. The dominant aspects of this spirituality are oral liturgy, narrative theology and witnessing; total involvement of the entire community in worship; service, visions and dreams in public worship; as well as a unique perception of the mind-body relationship revealed by healing through prayer.

Second, it has flexibility and adaptability to cultural and religious contexts. Pentecostal flexibility and adaptability to cultural and religious contexts are the keys to its success. Both popular forms and meanings are preserved in Pentecostalism, and therefore, it becomes an incarnation of the gospel in the culture of the mixed Amerindian and European lower classes (Gooren 2004:209).

Third, preaching is an act of worship. In a typical Pentecostal sermon, as with the whole service, the aim is more on worship and motivation than biblical exegesis and exposition. It can be said that in Pentecostal worship, the prayers, the words of exhortation, the sermon preached, and the songs sung are all interactive and engaging acts, which connect the worshipping community and God. This makes Pentecostal preaching an act of worship (White 2016:126).



Fourth, is the engaging style of preaching. Pentecostal preaching is characterised by its engaging style and presentation. Over and above the preacher's charisma, Pentecostal preaching is enhanced by the fact that the preaching, like the rest of the service, uses various forms of multimedia and the latest technologies. However, this is not surprising because historically, Pentecostalism started and developed in a time of innovations in mass communication technologies like radio and television. Since these innovations were optimistically embraced, they became key for quality preaching (White 2016:127 -128).

In the Ghanaian context, several strengths of Pentecostalism are described by White (2017: 4-6) as:

### **Emphasis on discipleship through home cells and Sunday school**

Western missionaries adopted 'the Salem system of settlement' for the discipleship of indigenous Ghanaian Christians. Salem was a kind of community established by the Basel missionaries (Presbyterian missionaries) for indigenous Christians. In this system of discipleship, converts were required to move out of their traditional homes and settle in 'Christian quarters' or *Salems* on the outskirts of the community. This approach resulted in the separation of Christian converts from their kin. Consequently, this created a cleavage in the community and harmed the communal life of the affected communities. It also undermined the authority of traditional rulers and family elders. Contrary to this, Pentecostals approached their discipleship inclusively, in the context of the church through Sunday school and home cells. These home cells did not only benefit the converts but also created room and opportunities for other non-Christians and relatives in the vicinity, to hear the gospel and to also be discipled (White 2017:4)

### **Missional inclusivity**

Unlike the Western missionaries' exclusive mission approach, Ghanaian Pentecostals approached mission inclusively. This approach emphasised the ministry of all believers. Pentecostals understood that every believer is gifted and anointed to participate in the *Missio Dei* (The Mission of God) according to their gifts and talents. Missional inclusivity says that God is an extra-ordinary God who uses ordinary believers who avail themselves to him for extra-ordinary activities (White 2017:5).



## **Self-finance approach**

Money can either empower or hinder missionary efforts. Often it creates a conflict of interest between the funding agents and the receiving organisation. While the Western missionaries understood mission as supplying indigenous Ghanaian Christians with financial support for their mission activities, the early Classical Pentecostals detached themselves from this mindset of dependence on external support. Therefore, the Ghanaian Classical Pentecostals proposed a self-support approach to mission, and thus succeeded in decolonising the Western missionaries' concept of financing mission (White 2017:5).

## **The relationship between gospel and culture**

Culture and the gospel have always moved along parallel lines. Missionaries were antagonistic to the idea of a marriage between the gospel and the various cultures they encountered. To address this problem of gospel and culture, the importance of the contextualisation of the gospel became a view shared by many theologians and was strongly pushed by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). Out of this came terms such as adaptation, accommodation, indigenisation, incarnation, contextualisation, and enculturation. One approach that has strongly featured in Ghana is enculturation. This term is commonly used to refer to the adaptation of the way Church teaching is presented to non-Christian cultures and the influence of those cultures on the evolution of these teachings (White 2017:5-6).

While enculturation is related to adaptation, they are, however, different. On one hand, adaptation involves the taking up by Christianity whatever it finds positive in all cultures. On the other hand, inculturation signifies an interior transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration into Christianity and the rooting of Christianity into various human cultures. In other words, inculturation involves the interaction between Christianity and culture such that there is no mutual extinction. Rather, the interaction between the two should result in mutual enrichment and progress, in which each interacting entity retains its essential features (Chupungco 1992:28-29; cf. Mogoane 2017:19). By inculturation "the evangeliser seeks to present the gospel to the people of different religio-cultural contexts in such a way that they

are not alienated from their own cultures, but find their cultures enriched and fulfilled through the gospel” (White 2017:6).

### **Joyous celebration in worship**

One of the unique features of Pentecostalism is the very expressive, expectant, dynamic, experiential, and interventionist nature of its worship. However, contrary to this vibrant way in which black Africans worship, through their singing, drumming and dancing (as a way of their emotional expression and religious life), the hymns of the liturgy of Western missionaries did not make room for many black Africans who became Christians. These Christians could not express their joyous worship according to their worldview. Hence, the vibrant Pentecostal worship came as a way of changing the concept of worship brought by Western missionaries. Pentecostalism has largely been coloured by a distinctively black culture, which produces a black form of Christianity, evident in their vibrant approach to worship and joyous celebration (White 2017:6).

### **2.10.2 Challenges facing Pentecostalism**

This study notes several challenges facing Pentecostalism, *inter alia*, careless growth of the Pentecostal movement, theological error, lack of academic content in sermons as well as fragmentation and division.

In his exploration of the growth of Pentecostal churches in Zambia, Lumbe (2008:63-88), mentions that during the time of the presidency of Dr Frederick Chiluba, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches mushroomed all over the country. However, certain traits accompanied this growth. Among these, was the careless growth of the movement. There were splits and divisions among the leaders of the different churches. In addition, there was no accountability regarding how the work in the movement was carried out. Each leader focused on his/her small domain and influence, without concern about the content of preaching and the conduct of preachers. As a result, questions regarding the integrity of the movement arose in the community, and in many ways, its growth has caused more discomfort than good. Because of a lack of mentoring and coaching for emerging leaders, the movement is rocked by moral and financial scandals.

In addition, theological error is one of the weaknesses of this movement. The Charismatic facet of this movement was, especially prone to adopt dubious theologies to consolidate the positions of their leaders or their influence. The teachings on giving, submission and authority, had developed into contentious issues (Lumbe 2008:91).

Furthermore, a typical Pentecostal sermon lacks academic content. As a result, White (2016:125-126) describes a typical Sunday sermon as “less of an exercise in rigorous biblical exposition and much more of an oratorical display aimed at motivating the church members to whatever course of action is being encouraged.”

Racial, doctrinal and personal issues simultaneously caused the many divisions that erupted in early Pentecostalism. Therefore, although Pentecostalism has been so successful in attracting converts, it has failed in maintaining church unity and sponsoring ecumenicalism. While Pentecostal flexibility and adaptability are the keys to its success, they are also keys to its fragmentation and division. The freedom by which people claim to operate in the Spirit, frequently causes schisms, as dissident leaders break off to start their churches. These dynamic religious entrepreneurs make Pentecostalism highly fragmented. It is through the work of the Spirit that the evangelical movement is driven forward and vitalised, but inevitably, this leads to a clash of rival charismata. Because of schisms and contentions, many Pentecostal leaders retire hurt and disillusioned. This partly explains the high drop-out rates in Pentecostal churches, especially in developing countries (Gooren 2004:208-209).

## **2.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed Pentecostalism as a context within which preaching happens. While this research acknowledges the difficulty of defining Pentecostalism, among other definitions, it states that Pentecostalism is that stream of Christianity that emphasises personal salvation in Christ as a transformative experience brought about by the Holy Spirit. In this experience, such pneumatic phenomena as speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing, miracles, and signs and wonders, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members. These manifestations are seen as evidence of the active presence of God's Spirit. Within this movement, there are African Initiated/Independent churches, Classical Pentecostals, and Charismatics (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:390).

Furthermore, this chapter discussed the American origins of Pentecostalism and its spread to other areas. In addition, entailed in the above discussion is the development of African Pentecostalism as part of Christianity in Africa that is influenced by a Pentecostal movement that started in the early Church of the Apostles as recorded in the Book of Acts 2:1-4; and revived by the Pentecostal movement that started in the United States of America. These churches practice a Christianity that is contextualised to the needs of Africans and the theology of the Holy Spirit (Kgatle 2017:4).

In the South African context, Resane (2018:1-2) traces the origins and development of the three major Classical Pentecostal churches in South Africa, namely, the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), the Assemblies of God (AOG) and the Full Gospel Church of God (FGC).

Regarding the involvement of Pentecostals in politics, some scholars argue that many Pentecostals emphasise involvement in all aspects of national life. However, others see ambiguity in the theological orientation of the movement in this regard.

This chapter went further to describe Pentecostal worship according to Alvarado (2012:139), and the Pentecostal hermeneutic. Gabaitse (2015:3-4) mentions that the Pentecostal hermeneutic has two forms: the articulated Pentecostal hermeneutic and the unarticulated Pentecostal hermeneutic.

Pentecostalism is strong concerning, *inter alia*, oral liturgy, flexibility and adaptability to cultural and religious contexts, preaching as an act of worship, missional inclusivity, and a self-finance approach. However, Pentecostalism has its challenges such as careless growth of the Pentecostal movement, theological error, and lack of academic content in sermons, as well as fragmentation and division.

The next chapter (Chapter 3) will focus on preaching.

## CHAPTER 3

### PREACHING

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with preaching in terms of its various aspects. While preaching is part of homiletics, there is a distinction between the two. Preaching refers to the actual act of proclaiming the good news, while homiletics, which is from the Greek word *homilia*, means a discourse or sermon, which is more than the act of preaching. It is the science and skills of effective proclamation. Homiletics is more about what happens in the classroom than what happens at the pulpit (Kurewa 2000:75). Homiletics is a practical theological discipline having its object as the ministry of the word, especially in the gathered congregation. As a subdiscipline of Practical Theology, it is concerned with the coming of God to men through the preached word. However, since our understanding of Practical Theology has recently changed from one of a clerical-pastoral theology to a church-oriented Practical Theology, homiletics is in the main, no longer seen as the pastor's technique, but as the church's praxis for communicating the gospel (cf. Lee 2004:4).

It can be argued that the work of the homiletician should be informed by kerygmatic theology, liberation theology, contextual theology, pastoral theology, and many more. However, a theological reframing informs that homiletics is not merely where theologies are applied or completed. Rather, it is a place where theology is done in light of its practices, theories, and contexts. In this sense, homiletics is not an application of theologies, but a place for doing theology that sees the activity of preaching as a locus of theological conversation between preachers and hearers (Jacobsen 2015:4).

Preaching as part of homiletics has for some time now, been the subject of wide-ranging research and authorship. For instance, Long (2005:34-42), examines the use of Scripture in contemporary preaching. While Florence (2008:116-133) deals with the preaching imagination, Brueggemann (2005:17-33) discusses preaching as reimagination. Regarding the pedagogy of preaching, Long (2008:3-17), describes a pedagogical change that is taking place in theological schools. He asserts that the teaching of preaching is forever under construction because it is subject to shifting

fashions of rhetoric, culture, technology and church life. Furthermore, Nieman (2008:18-40) discusses the notion of the practice of preaching as a Christian practice, while Tisdale (2008:75-89) explores the idea of exegeting the congregation, over and above textual exegesis. Recently, Kim (2017:3-2017) wrote about preaching with cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence is a requirement if preaching is to be seen as a bridge-building exercise between the world of the Bible and the world of the twenty-first century.

Given these various approaches to preaching, this chapter starts with the concept of preaching. Among the many definitions of preaching, is the distinction between the normative definition and the descriptive definition (Pleizier 2010:32). In addition, different views of the preaching event, approaches to preaching and forms of preaching are dealt with. Furthermore, this chapter discusses four key elements of preaching namely, the preacher, the sermon, the Bible and the congregation, as well as preaching as part of the liturgy, history of preaching, preaching in the African context, as well as preaching in the AOG (BTG).

The discussion below also lays the foundation for a response to two sub-questions of the core research question of this study, which are:

- What are the fundamental elements of preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region as it happens currently?
- What are the factors affecting the preaching of Pentecostal churches in the Western Reef Region?

### **3.2 THE CONCEPT OF PREACHING**

There are several expressions for preaching in the New Testament, *inter alia*, *kerussein*, *euaggelizein*, *didaskein*, *marturein*, and *presbeuein*. Each of these expressions has its emphasis on the preaching phenomenon. *Kerussein* refers to a public proclamation, like that of a herald on a foreign assignment announcing something that has not been heard before. *Euaggelizein* strongly emphasises the joyful content of the message (the good news/*euaggelion*). It can, therefore, be said that *kerussein* and *euaggelizein* are related to mission sermon or evangelistic preaching. However, *didaskein* (and *Didache*) entail the clear facts of the case worth

knowing, in the message. *Didaskein* has its function in the building up of an existing congregation, by instructing it in a previously unknown doctrine. *Maturein* has a connotation of a close relationship between the proclamation and its proclaimer. That is, as one preaches, one allows oneself to be a witness of something else outside oneself (Bonhoeffer 2002:32).

Peppler (n.d.:2) defines preaching according to several authors: Campbell Morgan's more dynamic approach defines preaching as 'the declaration of the grace of God to human need on the authority of the Throne of God'. Bernard Manning defines preaching as 'a manifestation of the incarnate word, from the written word, by the spoken word'. Haddon Robinson's (2001:21) more comprehensive definition of (expository) preaching is 'the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers. Preaching is a living process involving God, the preacher, and the congregation. In summary of the above definitions, preaching can be said to be 'the authoritative pronouncement of the word of God with power' (cf. Peppler n.d.:2).

The Bible often mentions preaching and teaching together, because the two are closely related. At times, it seems that there is little difference between them. The same person was usually both a preacher and a teacher (See Matt 4:23; 11:1; Acts 5:42; 15:35). Sometimes preaching is proclamation, such as announcing the good news of the gospel to those who need it (For example, Luke 4:18; 9:6; Acts 8:4,12,40), while teaching is more concerned with the instruction of those who already believe the gospel (Refer to John 14:26; Acts 18:11; 20:20; 1 Cor 4:17). Teaching is necessary also for those who do not believe (Luke 4:31; 5:3; 21:37; Acts 4:2; 5:21,25; 18:11; 2 Tim 2:24-26) while preaching the great facts of the gospel of Jesus Christ is still necessary to challenge the believer (Rom 1:15; 16:25; 2 Cor 4:5; Col 1:28; 2 Tim 4:2). From this juxtaposition of preaching and teaching, it is better not to make too sharp a distinction between the two. Preaching Christ through the proclamation of the gospel is helpful for both believers and non-believers because the gospel is not just the message of salvation, but it is also the completely new life in Jesus Christ (Fleming 2004: 373).



Regarding the relationship between preaching and contemporary issues, Lephoko (2010:102) quotes two authors as follows: “Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes that ‘the business of preaching is to relate the teaching of the Scriptures to what is happening in our day.’ Professor Ian Pitt-Watson writes, ‘Every sermon is stretched like a bowstring between the texts of the Bible, on the one hand, the problems of contemporary human life on the other. If the string is insecurely tethered to either end, the bow is useless’” (cf. Lephoko 2010:102).

There is a distinction between a normative definition and a descriptive definition of preaching. On one hand, a normative perspective defines preaching from either a particular theological tradition or a communicative perspective. On the other hand, descriptive definitions focus on the actual phenomenon without requiring a particular theological or communicative standard. Although Pleizier discusses several aspects of preaching as discussed below, he prefers the phrase “homiletic interaction” over the term “preaching” (Pleizier 2010:32).

### **God’s presence in preaching**

From dialectical theology and kerugmatic approach, preaching is in essence not organised. Rather, it happens. In this happening of the preaching, God is somehow present, speaking and interacting with his people. In this sense, preaching then becomes a creative act of God in the present (Pleizier 2010:35-36). This also means that the deeper existential and ontological level of preaching is that it represents a kind of fellowship within the presence of God (Louw 2016:1). Regarding this presence of God in preaching, Long (2005a:16) uses the phrase “the presence of Christ, since the preacher acts in Christ’s name.”

However, preaching is not only the act of God, since it involves the social practice of interhuman communication, where the exchange of meaning also takes place. Therefore, based on this understanding, it can be said that preaching is an event in which interhuman, and divine discourses are bound together in a complex act of communication. Whereas God can address human beings in dreams, meditating and praying (immediate speaking of God), God uses human instrumentality to communicate his word (mediate speaking of God) (Pleizier 2010:36). In the words of Long (2005a:16), “Preaching is a human activity, but not only a human activity, Christ



is present in the church, with the church, for the church, in the world, and for the world through preaching.”

### **The conviction of the audience in preaching**

In preaching there is an expectation of the word of God, not only on the part of the preacher but also on the part of the congregation. This expectation of the congregation or hearers differs from the expectation of people attending a lecture or being in a theatre since the hearers are faithfully expecting a Word from God. In congregational worship, the listening experience is framed and influenced by religious attitudes and expectations of the listeners (Pleizier 2010:37-38).

### **The relationship between the preacher and the audience**

Since preaching is a social practice in which the preacher speaks and the audience listens, there should be an understanding on the part of the congregation, if the speaking by the preacher has to be complete. Preaching is a social interactive event, even if the speaking and the listening are done by separate parties (Pleizier 2010:38). Preaching should be participatory since it is a conversation between the pulpit and the congregation. It is a conversation in the sense that the preacher must present himself or herself with the understanding that the congregation follows what he/she says, and the congregation responds in some way either by shouting “Halleluyah!” or “Amen!” or by nodding of heads or clapping of hands (Kurewa 2000:139). Furthermore, participatory preaching can be viewed as corporate preaching when done in the form of the congregation praying for the preacher before he/she preaches. This encourages the preacher when knowing that the congregation stands with him/her in prayer for the preaching event (Kurewa 2000:141).

In preaching, there are some congregational dynamics that the preacher has to be aware of. Over and above understanding the socio-economic and environmental surroundings of a congregation, the preacher needs to also understand the nuances silently put into motion during preaching. These subtle issues arise as people listen to a sermon. During the preaching, the preacher preaches at least four sermons simultaneously, which correspond to the four modes of language. That is the auditory, the visual, the emotional and the intellectual sermons. While the auditory sermon is heard through sound, the visual sermon is perceived through body actions, the emotional sermon corresponds to the language of feeling, and the intellectual sermon

is perceived through the mind. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the preacher that he/she ensures a balance of all the four sermons or do something in case there are deficiencies therein (Nhiwatiwa 2012:88-89).

### **Imagination in preaching**

In some of his sixteen theses suggesting that evangelical preaching finds itself in a new cultural epistemological context, Brueggemann (2005:22) states that the work of preaching is an act of imagination, offering an image through which perception, experience and faith can be reorganised in alternative ways. According to Long (2005c:39-41), in the imaginative construction of the text, preachers do not only have to retrieve the concepts contained in the text, but also have to read the text closely, negotiating its textual syntax and *genre*, as well as the rhetorical strategies expressed in the linguistic designs of the text. For this reason, preachers have to be eclectic in their exegetical and interpretive methods. Instead of using one path towards the meaning of the text, various paths should be explored, to both enter the text and experience its impact. The invitation of preaching is to abandon the script in which one had confidence and enter into a different script imaginatively so that the script tells one's life story differently. This presentation of an alternative script that is witnessed as true, invites the listener out of his/her assumed context into many alternative contexts where different scripts are authenticated and made credible.

According to Nhiwatiwa (2012:61), imagination in preaching is the process of incarnating the sermon by making the preached word assume identifiable life of its own within the experiences of the listeners. It is an integral part of preaching, happening from the jotting down of the sermon notes to the textual exegesis, and finally the delivery of the sermon. For example, Jesus was using imagination when he likened the Kingdom of God to various things, and in the process called upon his listeners to imagine with him.

Imagination happens in both the preacher and the listeners. For the preacher, it is the ability to form images in the minds of the listeners, which are not physically present to their senses. For the listeners, it helps them to hear the risen Jesus Christ, see him and touch him through the sermon (Nhiwatiwa 2012:61-62). For instance, when a preacher preaches a sermon about the Israelites marching around the walls of Jericho,

the text must have the congregation imagining themselves marching around the walls also (Stackhouse 2014:138). Furthermore, imagination serves to recreate how life is experienced, and it is therefore, crucial in both the preparation and hearing of a sermon (Eslinger 2002:30).

There are three principles of how the preacher's images can be formed clearly and forcefully in the imagination of the hearers, to enhance changes in their attitudes, values and life directions. These principles of the process of imaginative communication are: First, the images must be taken from real life so that they form in the hearers' imagination. Second, the language used by the preacher should be as concrete as possible (not just generalisations), so that it evokes immediate and familiar sensory experiences in the hearers. For instance, it might be good to give an example of a specific marriage and/or wedding, rather than just referring to holy matrimony. In addition, the preacher needs to avoid all self-conscious interruptions in narration and descriptions, since they disturb the vital sermonic flow, and thus cause the congregation's imaginative faculties to focus more on the preacher than the word of God. Third, the language used by the preacher must be that of the preacher and not of someone else or an assumed "pulpit personality" (Eslinger 2002:30-31).

### **3.2.1 Different views of the preaching event**

#### **Preaching as Christian praxis**

To explain the phenomenon of preaching as praxis, it is appropriate to first consider the difference between practice and praxis. While practice implies a simple non-reflective performance of a task in a dispassionate, value-free manner, praxis is an action saturated with meaning. An action is value-directed and theory-laden in the sense that it includes theory as its vital constituent. While practice may ordinarily refer to the application of truth or theory or the methods and means by which a skill or theory is applied, praxis is different. Praxis implies the form of action that includes the "*telos*" or final meaning and character of truth. In praxis, one's actions are not only guided by the intention of realising the purpose, but also by discovering and grasping the purpose by the action itself (Anderson 2001:47-48).

Flowing from the explanation above, one may consider the task of constructing a sermon. If the sermon manuscript entailing all exegetical skills, is the goal of the

preacher, with no regard for its effects when read (or heard), such that the heart of the listener is convicted, then the purpose of the sermon as the word of God being preached is not reached. That is, the production of the sermon manuscript and its preaching is mere practice and not praxis. The production of the sermon manuscript and verbalisation of its content will constitute praxis if it involves the realisation of the intended result or effect. This then will confirm the words of Isaiah 55:11: “So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth: it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Anderson 2001:48-50).

### **Preaching as poetry**

Brueggemann (1989:2-3), bemoans the fact that preaching happens in a context in which truth is reduced, twisted and tailored to the extent that it confirms the technical reason that leaves people unbothered; having the ideology that leaves them with uncriticised absolutes. He proposes another way of preaching, an alternative way of discourse that is dramatic, artistic and capable of inviting people to join in a conversation that pushes out the presumptions of the world in which most people are trapped. He argues that if preaching is reduced speech, it leads to reduced lives, rather than being the imaginative speech, which permits people to enter into new worlds of faith and therein participate in joyous, obedient life.

To counter the situation of reduced truth, preachers are to be poets that speak against a “prose world”, that is, a world that is organised in settled formulae. In this sense, poetic speech becomes the only speech worth doing in a situation of reductionism, the only proclamation worthy of the name preaching (Brueggemann 1989:3).

### **Preaching as art**

From a traditional point of view, preaching means delivering a sermon behind the pulpit. From this viewpoint, various books on homiletics guide preachers on the development of sermon forms and ways of delivery. In this sense, preaching centres on the preacher and what he/she says, but does not create a dialogue with the listeners. This makes listening to a sermon monotonous and boring, especially for those people who are used to mixed media technology. However, preaching as a performance emphasises the art form. Therefore, it can borrow from different creative

styles, such as dialogue, storytelling, dramatised presentation, call and response, as well as mixed media with images and music. In addition, the preacher can inculcate new values and understanding through intentional movements, gestures, music and habits to create new communal environments (Pui-lan 2012:13-14).

Preaching as art should closely be connected to spirituality and the attempt to give form and expression to religious experiences. While the concept of spirituality is multifaceted and has many meanings, in this case, it can be said to be the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose. Spirituality is the way people experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to nature and the significant or sacred. Furthermore, spirituality can be understood as one's relationship to a transcendent, which for some people might be God, and for others might be different conceptions of how they see themselves. Spirituality is such an important dimension of human life that it is difficult to heal the psychosocial and biological dimensions of humans without due consideration for the spiritual origins of their disarray (Louw 2016:2-3).

### **Preaching as part of liturgy**

Since preaching happens in the setting of congregational worship, it takes place with other social practices such as corporate prayer, catechetical instruction and confession (Pleizier 2010:39). It often takes place within a particular liturgical tradition of a given faith community. Pertinent to this, several points are noteworthy: First, in a German research to investigate how different liturgical sequences in church services affect the sermon reception by congregants, it was found that the shape of the liturgy barely influences how the congregation perceives the speech acts of the sermon. Second, when relating this receptivity of the sermon by listeners to the liturgical order, the liturgical order of worship functions as a structural condition in which listeners move from the stage of opening up to the sermon to the stage of dwelling in the sermon. Therefore, liturgy functions in two ways from the listener's perspective: the preparatory way and the dramatic way. It prepares the listener for the sermon in the preparatory stage and engages the listener in the dramatic flow of the broader liturgy of the church (Pleizier 2010:160). Liturgy structures the moment of listening to the sermon since the sermon is preceded by various liturgical acts, before happening in a fixed moment in the service. That is, the liturgy puts the audience in the position to

listen and helps the listener to move along in preparation for the sermon. The liturgical acts preceding the sermon serve as structural markings that indicate the movement towards the sermon (Pleizier 2010:161-162). Since the sermon is part of the dramatic flow of the church service, some listeners in the congregation do not experience it as a distinct part of the service, rather the service is experienced as one dramatic whole (Pleizier 2010:165).

However, Buttrick (1994:44-45) argues that preaching is not just a component of liturgies such as hymns, readings and creeds. This emanates from the assumption of the meaning of liturgy as a “public work of the people”. Buttrick contends that preaching is not something that is originated and performed by people only. Preaching is larger than liturgy because it happens within liturgy as well as beyond liturgy.

Preaching as a liturgical event can take place on many different levels and through multidimensional approaches. First is a kerygmatic dimension, which is linked with the traditional understanding of preaching as proclamation and rhetoric reasoning. In this sense, the importance of exegesis and hermeneutics is emphasised. The emphasis is then on the rational and analytic capacity of both the preacher and the hearer. The second dimension is the emphasis on action and performance. Since preaching happens as an action within the concrete, social contexts and cultural settings, it focuses on praxis and public issues. In this regard, emphasis is placed on change, transformation, liberation and societal reconstruction. Third, is the deeper existential and ontological level of preaching, where it is perceived as having orientation within life events in fellowship with others within the presence of God. Preaching takes place in spaces of silence and contemplation and focuses on the symbolic and metaphoric meaning of different narratives and images in the Bible (Louw 2016:1).

### **3.2.2 Approaches to preaching**

Although sermons take various shapes, their movement tends to take one of the two basic directions, namely, deductive or inductive patterns (Eslinger (2002:28).

#### **Deductive approach**

This method of preaching was applicable for centuries past, before the critique of the old homiletic orthodoxy. Deductive preaching has an internal movement and logic that begins with a general truth and as its goal, leads to a specific application for a particular

situation. This method of preaching has long been the norm of preaching, both in structure and exegesis. Structurally, its topic is stated beforehand, and it is then broken into its constitutive points, which will then form its sub-topics. In this way, the sub-topics are expanded with illustrations and applied to a particular life situation (Eslinger 2002:16).

One of the downsides of the deductive approach is its minimalist and often-arbitrary relationship with biblical material. For example, the topic may or may not be drawn from the Bible. In addition, in deductive preaching, there is general misuse of the Scripture in the sense that the passages selected for use are first boiled down such that at the end there is only a thematic residue. A further critique of the deductive way of preaching is that its thesis or topic is first expounded and then applied to the listeners' life situations. This presupposes passive listening on the part of the congregation and authoritative speaking on the part of the preacher, which constitutes an unnatural mode of communication (Eslinger 2002:16).

Furthermore, the other flaw in the deductive approach to preaching is the sermonic structure and movement. Since the sermon thesis is broken into several sub-topics, the transition from one subtopic to the other often becomes unsuccessful, and as a result, listeners hear several sermonettes instead of a flow of one continuous sermon (Eslinger 2002:17).

### **Inductive approach**

This approach embodies certain characteristics that commend it as a living method in the homiletical approach. It is founded on the conviction that the congregation hearing the sermon should take the same inductive trip that brought the preacher to the pulpit. However, the congregation should be allowed to arrive at its conclusions. In this way, the implications for the hearers' situations as they arise out of the preaching become clear and inescapable (Eslinger 2002:28). This resonates with the assertion by Elliot (2000:6) that in an inductive sermon, thought moves from the listener's particular experiences to the general truth or conclusion. This happens when the listeners are invited to "retrace" the journey taken by the preacher in constructing the sermon, to see if they (listeners) will come to the same conclusion.



A sermon, according to Fred Craddock (2005:86) is defined more by its content and purpose than by its form. Therefore, there is no normative structure that tells if the sermon will be effective or not. However, several considerations have to be taken into account if the sermon is to be inductive. The effectiveness of that inductive sermon will depend on the number of considerations incorporated into the sermon, namely, movement, unity and imagination (Eslinger 2002:28-33).

In inductive preaching, movement involves first, consistent progression of the sermon from the present experience of the hearers to the point where the sermon will leave the congregation to make their own decisions and conclusion. For this to happen, the preacher is faced with the challenge of creating in the audience a sense of anticipation and then sustaining it. This is important in inductive preaching because the message is the end of the sermon. In sustaining anticipation and interest, the preacher must first note that preaching is not a literary piece but an oral address, and therefore needs appropriate rhetoric (that is, the art of persuasive discourse). Second, in the sermon preparation, the preacher must sequentially list ideas and check whether these ideas will be able to sustain the necessary anticipation of the message at the terminus of the sermon. Third, the preacher must carefully scrutinise the transitions, and identify transitional markers from one idea to the other, making sure that the ideas are joined smoothly with words such as “and”, “therefore” and “beyond this”. These transitional markers function as pegs on which the ideas in the sermon are hung (Eslinger 2002:29).

The other primary characteristic of the inductive sermon is its unity. Sermonic unity involves the central idea, that the preacher should be able to state in a single sentence. This idea is the appropriate and necessary outcome of the twin processes of scriptural and congregational interpretation. This governing theme serves to attract all appropriate material to the sermon in an ordered manner. It also guards against the introduction of extraneous material that may potentially be distracting to the listeners (Eslinger 2002:29-30).

Concerning imagination, while illustrations may serve an ornamental function in the sermon, images are essential to the form and content of the sermon, in its entirety. Since images serve to recreate existential life experiences, they are decisive in both the preparation and hearing of sermons. The preacher needs an “empathetic



imagination” to interpret the congregation and craft the sermon so that it reflects the real experiences of the listeners (Eslinger 2002:30).

While Eslinger (2002:28-33), as mentioned above, concentrates on factors enhancing the effectiveness of an inductive sermon, Elliot (2000:6) regards three skills as crucial in becoming an inductive preacher. These are first, cultivating the ability to notice and recreate concrete experiences. The second is structuring the sermon as a good story and building anticipation on the side of the listeners. The third is allowing the listener to complete the sermon.

### **3.2.3 Forms of preaching**

#### **Rhetorical preaching**

Rhetoric is the study of all processes by which people influence each other, through symbols, regardless of the intent of the source. It is the study of what is persuasive in human communication, whether intentional or a result of the human condition. It is concerned with social truths addressed to others, justified by reasons that reflect particular cultural values (Hogan & Reid 1999:9). It is the art of persuading people to accept something, whether true or false (Augustine 2002:278).

Regarding rhetoric in preaching, the assumption is that the preacher’s task is to persuade, although that particular rhetoric must be informed by biblical theology, as well as the Bible’s rhetoric rather than purely literary interests. Furthermore, while the theory and practice of rhetoric are necessary for preaching, learning rhetorical theory does not make one an effective preacher (Dykstra 2001:11-13).

In his defence of the use of rhetorical preaching, Augustine (2002:278), argues that preachers of the gospel cannot sit by and be afraid of using rhetoric, while those people who convince others of falsehood apply rhetoric, to the extent that this rhetoric is used even in attacking the truth of the gospel.

However, the downside of rhetorical preaching is that sometimes the preacher’s penchant for rhetoric leads to a tendency of apologising for Scripture by overly trying to spice it up with rhetorical devices. This compromises the centrality of Scripture in preaching. In addition, in this process, preachers inadvertently betray their lack of confidence in the word to do their work (Stackhouse 2014:27).

## Narrative preaching

Eslinger (2002:63-64) briefly defines narrative as a representation of a cause-and-effect action in words. That is, for there to be a narrative, there has to be an action, as well as the detectability of cause-and-effect. Furthermore, in the narrative, the role of the story characters is important, and it is shaped by the actions in the narrative. While actions reveal characterisation in the narrative, in the biblical narrative there are other means of revealing a character. Among these ways of revealing a character, we find appearance, gesture, posture, comments by one character about another and the character's direct speech. Narrative preaching includes the form in which the sermon is intentionally shaped by the form of the narrative text or follows the structure of a short story. Another form of narrative preaching is when preachers use their imagination, thinking metaphorically to "name grace in human experience" (Elliot 2000:1).

Narrative preaching entails various aspects such as narrative hermeneutics, narrative semantics, narrative enculturation and narrative worldview. While narrative hermeneutics entails the focus on biblical literary forms and their impact on the sermon, narrative semantics refers to the shape of the sermon. Furthermore, narrative enculturation refers to the connection between meaning in a sermon and culture, while narrative worldview relates to larger issues of sermonic context (Eslinger 2002:58).

The interest in narrative preaching over the last few decades is a result of many factors, one of which is people's love for stories. Preachers, therefore, use stories to enliven their sermons. In addition, the variety of *genres* of biblical material calls for different approaches to preaching. The rationale behind this belief is that the Bible as the word of God shows that God saw it necessary to communicate with people in a multiplicity of ways such as narrative, poetry, prophecy, the Law, wisdom and hymns (Stevenson 2005:101).

One of the structural features of a narrative, whether sacred or secular, is the plot. Since narrative preaching is akin to a narrative art form, it has a homiletical plot. Essential to the notion of a homiletical plot in a sermon is the sense that there is a problem or a conflict which increases in intensity through the sermon until the gospel provides the key to resolving it (Stevenson 2005:102).

There are five stages through which a preacher moves during the course of the narrative sermon, namely, upsetting the equilibrium, analysing the discrepancy, disclosing the clue to resolution, experiencing the gospel, and anticipating the consequences (Stevenson (2005:102-103)).

During the first stage of upsetting the equilibrium, the preacher begins the sermon by getting the congregation off balance. This happens when he/she introduces the problem or challenge or question, which is at the heart of the text without giving away what he/she will talk about. At the stage of analysing the discrepancy, the preacher allows the problem, challenge or question, to get worse before the solution is revealed, by probing beyond the mere symptoms of the problem/challenge/question. This can be done by asking the question “why” and exhausting all human answers in attempting to resolve the challenge.

The next stage is disclosing the clue to resolution. Once the congregation has realised that all logical and reasonable human answers to the challenge of the text have failed, suddenly the gospel breaks in with the solution.

The stage of experiencing the gospel is only the brief moment of suddenly realising that through Christ, God has another answer to the challenge. The gospel is the answer to the problem of the text.

Last, is the stage of anticipating the consequences. In this step, the original problem/challenge is now seen in a completely new way, through the eyes of the gospel. For this reason, the gospel is celebrated and applied, depending on what the need is.

Mathewson (2007:34-38) uses the acronym “ACTS” to highlight the steps a preacher could take in preaching a narrative sermon. A – Action; C- Characters; T- Talking and S-Setting. In preaching a narrative sermon, action is vital in the sense that the narrative develops more on the action than on the development of particular characters. Regarding characters, preachers have to note how characters relate to each other, especially the central characters who are indispensable to the plot. Pertaining to talking, preachers will do well to note that dialogue carries much of a load of meaning. As such, it is important to note what the characters in the narrative are saying to have a clue as to what the author’s prophetic message is. Last, an important feature for

consideration in narrative preaching is the historical-cultural and literary settings. This feature helps in the analysis of when and where the story happened, as well as the location and role of the text in the larger narrative.

As with other forms of preaching, narrative preaching has its downsides. Narrative preaching emphasises more the human story than the story of Jesus Christ (Elliot 2000:2). In narrative preaching, the emphasis on matters of the plot tends towards the neglect of more significant issues about the character of the one who is at the heart of Christian preaching. In addition, since narrative preaching follows a deductive approach, the result is that human experience dictates the terms of discussion happening in the sermon (Stevenson 2005:103).

### **Prophetic preaching**

Tisdale (2010:3-9) concedes that there is value in living within the tensions of definitions offered by scholars for different concepts. Consequently, she defines prophetic preaching according to different authors as follows:

- Phillip Wogaman gives a broad explanation of prophetic preaching as speaking for, or on behalf of God. This implies that a prophet will first have to grasp what God thinks before he can speak for him. He concludes that genuine prophetic preaching draws people into the reality of God, such that they can no longer be content with conventional wisdom and superficial existence (Wogaman 1998:3; cf. Tisdale 2010:4).
- Don Ottoni-Wilhelm defines prophetic preaching as a divinely inspired speech enlivened by the Holy Spirit, in a gathering of a faith community. This means prophetic preaching is neither exclusively moral exhortations nor prediction. Rather, it proclaims God's word against everything that threatens God's reconciling intention for creation, and it sustains the vital ministry of compassion for others (Ottoni-Wilhelm 2003:77; cf. Tisdale 2010:5).
- For Walter Brueggemann, prophetic preaching is not only about societal issues such as social injustice and politics, but it is fundamentally about calling the people of God to radically reorient their worldview and consciousness to perceive the world as God sees it (Brueggemann 1978:3; cf. Tisdale 2010:6).
- John McClure adds another perspective to prophetic preaching. He defines it as "an imaginative re-appropriation of traditional narratives and symbols for the

purpose of critiquing a dangerous and unjust present situation and providing an alternative vision of God's future" (McClure 2007:117; cf. Tisdale 2010:8).

While it may be difficult to define prophetic preaching, Tisdale (2010:9-10) lists the following as some of its hallmarks: First, prophetic preaching is rooted in the biblical witness of the OT Hebrew prophets and the words and actions of Jesus Christ, who is the prophet par excellence. Second, it is concerned with the evils of the present social order and focuses on corporate public issues more than individual personal concerns. Third, it challenges the *status quo* and accepted cultures, criticising that which is not of God, and naming the new future reality that God will bring to pass. Fourth, it offers hope for the future and promises liberation for the oppressed people of God. Fifth, it empowers and encourages its hearers to work towards changing the social order. Sixth, prophetic preaching requires the preacher to have concern for the things that concern God, such as social justice, courage and conviction to speak God's heart, as well as honesty and humility in preaching.

Prophetic preaching can also be applied in preaching from the OT narrative texts. This stems from the fact that in the Hebrew Bible, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are classified as former prophets although they are historical narratives. That is, they are as prophetic as the latter prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah but differ in the manner they communicate their prophetic message. Together with the books of the Torah (the Law or teaching), they communicate a prophetic message or at least a teaching (Mathewson 2014:34).

Furthermore, these narrative texts can offer a prophetic challenge in a gospel-centred sermon. In this regard, the preacher should consider these questions in developing the gospel-centred sermon. First, the preacher should answer the question "What is the theological message that the story communicates?" In this way, the preacher will discover the theology that is reflected and expressed in the narrative text. The second question that the preacher should ask is "How does the story's theology connect with the Bible's larger story or meta-narrative? This will assist the preacher to prepare a gospel-based, Christ-centered sermon without creating dubious connections to Jesus Christ. Third, the preacher has to ask the question "What admonition or exhortation does the story offer?" This third question offers the prophetic challenge in the story (Mathewson 2014:38-41).

### 3.3 IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF PREACHING

As stated in Section 3.1, Long (2005:11-16) mentions four key elements of preaching as the preacher, the sermon, the Bible and the congregation. This section will first deal with the preacher and metaphors of the preacher, mentioned by Tom Long before delving into other elements of preaching.

#### 3.3.1 The preacher: Tom Long's metaphors of the preacher

The word metaphor derives from the Greek word *metaphor*, which is a combination of two words, *meta* meaning “over” and *pherein*, which means, “carry”. Therefore, the word metaphor refers to a particular set of linguistic and thought processes whereby aspects of one object are “carried over” or transferred to another object. In this sense then, we speak of the second object as in relation to the first (Johnson 2014:27). Similarly, Jones (1999:173) defines a metaphor as a trope or literary form whereby a name or expression is applied to a person or object to which it is imaginatively but not literally applied. For instance, in theology, it is said ‘God is love’.

Tom Long uses several metaphors of a preacher; *inter alia*, the herald, the pastor and the witness.

##### 3.3.1.1 The preacher as the herald

The preacher as a herald (*keryx*, meaning town crier) is the most common metaphor used in the Bible. The town crier is given a message to proclaim in some public spaces such as the market square, without fear or favour. The Apostle Paul uses the word when he says: “We herald Christ crucified” and “We herald ...Jesus Christ as Lord” (Stott 1982:135). The image of the preacher as a herald is derived from the New Testament (NT) Greek word *kerusso*, which describes preaching. The herald metaphor entails a high theological view since it relates preaching to the direct address of God. In this sense, the preacher speaks the words of the sermon while it is God who does the proclamation. While preaching might involve the interplay between the human and the divine, the conviction behind the herald image is that which emphasises that the divine has to take almost the whole control (Long 2005a:19; Johnson 2014:92).

However, Johnson (2015:31) argues that the image of the preacher as herald as used by Long is as biblically rooted as Long asserts. This is because Long uses the Greek verb *kerysso* for the English noun preacher. Johnson maintains that as a verb, *kerysso* does not refer to the herald as a person but to the preaching, which the herald does. On the other hand, the forms of this verb are used throughout the NT to describe various forms of preaching (except the Johannine literature and Hebrews). *Keryx*, which translates as “herald,” appears only three times in the NT: It is applied to Paul twice (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11) and is used once about Noah (2 Pet 2:5). Thus, while the NT writers describe preaching as “heralding,” they do not ordinarily describe the preacher as a herald. This is because of two reasons: First, in the NT the focus is on preaching and not the preacher because God or Christ is the true preacher. Therefore, there is little place for the human herald. Second, in Greek history, *keryx* had the specific meaning of an “inviolable sacred personage,” which contrasts sharply with Christian preachers who are persecuted and given up to death for Jesus’ sake (2 Cor 4:11).

The herald image is more concerned about how the sermon reflects the message of the Bible and is careful not to let the preacher’s rhetoric interfere with the message. According to this metaphor, the preacher has to go to the Scriptures, hear the word of God and then faithfully and truly speak this word as is. Attempting to make the word more colourful or engaging with the listeners would constitute a mistrust of the divine message and an arrogant assumption that as a preacher, one can improve the speech of God. The herald preacher seeks to have a sermon that is more faithful to the message he/she receives from the Scripture rather than try to make the message more “effective” by even rearranging a few words in the sermon. Heralds do not aspire to be poetic in their preaching but rather that they are responsive and obedient to the message of the Scripture and act as mouthpieces of God (Long 2005a:20; Johnson 2014: 90-91).

Three other facets of the herald image are important: the message, the importance of the message; and the preacher as both the insider and outsider in relation to the congregation. First, according to the conviction of the herald image, the message, (which from the Christian perspective is the Gospel of Jesus Christ) is of primary importance. The preacher has to get it straight and speak it plainly without alteration



to those to whom he/she has been sent. Therefore, pertaining to the message, the herald preaching emphasises that the word of God has to be spoken faithfully and by so doing God will speak to his people. In this, is the conviction that the herald does not possess the word of God but the command to preach the word faithfully (Long 2005a:20-21).

Second, is the importance of the message as contrasted with the personality of the preacher. The conviction of the herald view is that the preacher does not have to try and be somebody, but rather try to do something on God's behalf and under his authority. In this regard, the preacher's personal experiences or opinions, family stories and religious experiences are not important in the sermon, rather importance is put on the message in its undiluted form (Long 2005a:22). The preacher as a herald must focus on announcing both the presence and the promise of Jesus Christ who is publicly set forth before their eyes as crucified (Galatians 3:1) (Johnson 2014:93).

Third, the herald is both the outsider and the insider in relation to the congregation. On one hand, the herald announces the news from outside (from God), but on the other hand, unlike the herald who brings the message and then goes away, the herald preacher stays with the recipients of the message to announce yet another message (Long 2005a:22).

In general, the responsibilities of a herald include making announcements, directing and marshalling participants in an organised activity, mediating between leaders in conflict or common cause, being a messenger, promoting and advocating a particular cause, and preceding or foreshadowing a greater subject (Johnson 2014:93-94).

### **Strengths of the herald image**

The herald image's strengths lie in that its mandate for the preacher is to remain as close to the scriptural message as possible. As such, it ensures that the preacher has something vital, with biblical and theological character to announce. It helps the preacher to avoid popular wisdom, moralisms, bits and pieces of advice and encouragement for positive thinking derived from the culture prevalent in popular sermons. In addition, the herald image provides a strong basis for prophetic preaching. This does not only mean foretelling the future but also remaining faithful to the biblical text regardless of the cost or reaction of the hearers. Furthermore, the herald image's



strength lies in its insistence on the transcendent dimension of preaching. That is, the power of preaching is not limited to the preacher's strength nor its truthfulness to the preacher's wisdom because then it will not be useful for people's lives (Long 2005a:21-24; cf. Johnson 2015:32).

### **Weaknesses of the herald image**

One of the downsides of the herald image is that its disdain for rhetorical form and communication goes contrary to what is known (through literary Bible interpretation) about the Scripture itself. This is because Bible writers consistently employed rhetorical forms and techniques and were attentive to the forceful and imaginative language of the Scripture. Therefore, it does not make much sense for preachers to concentrate only on the biblical text and leave out matters of language, communication and rhetoric (Long 2005a:24-26; cf. Johnson 2015:32).

The herald image also undermines almost serious theological thinking about the practical aspects of creating sermons because in creating a sermon, issues such as structure, illustrations and delivery have to be thought of and decided upon. Therefore, it will be impossible to do that if such matters are not permissible. Furthermore, some homileticians argue that the herald image does not take sufficient account of the doctrine of the incarnation. This is because the herald image's view is to bring the good news from outside while incarnation affirms that God's word comes also from inside. Finally, the herald image fails to take into account the context of preaching, because the context affects both the content and the style of preaching. The character and integrity of the preacher, and whether or not the congregation trusts or believes the preacher will somehow shape the event of preaching (Long 2005a:24-26).

#### **3.3.1.2 The preacher as the pastor**

While the herald image focuses on the biblical word and being faithful to God's message, the pastor image moves all to the other end of the spectrum and focuses on the listener (Johnson 2015:33). The pastor image focuses on the listeners and the impact the sermon makes on them. As such, this understanding of preaching is referred to as conversational, therapeutic or educational because it deliberately sets out to touch and involve people's concerns, effecting a positive change in the hearers. The preacher as a pastor seeks to be aware of and respond to the needs of the

hearers. The pastoral preacher has the responsibility of creating a communication strategy that will bring change in the hearers. Therefore, the pastor's primary concern is not what he/she will say but what he/she wants to happen after preaching (Long 2005a:28-30). While the herald metaphor minimises the personality of the preacher, the pastoral image puts a spotlight on it. In this view, character, experience, insight, sensitivity, professional skills and relationship with the congregation are all important in doing the pastoral task. Pastoral preachers tend to look for those texts in the Scripture that are about real-life issues and have a healing possibility thereon (Long 2005a:31-32; cf. Johnson 2015:33).

In summary, these are the three basic implications of the pastor's image for the practice of preaching: First, the preacher is concerned with what happens inside the hearer. That is, the hearers should be different or better people at the end of the sermon compared to what they were at the beginning. Second, the preacher's personality, character, experience, and relationship with the hearers should have an impact on the hearers. Third, the preacher is looking for an interpretation that involves personal issues and offers the possibility of healing to the congregants (Johnson 2015:33).

### **Strengths of the pastor image**

One of the major strengths of the pastoral image is that it gives attention and relevance to the healing power of the gospel and the inner dynamics of the hearers. Furthermore, the other strength is that the pastor image thinks about a sermon in very practical ways. The preacher has to analyse the specific personal and social contexts of the congregation to make the sermon relevant to the needs of the hearers (Long 2005: 32; cf. Johnson 2015:33).

### **Weaknesses of the pastor image**

There are several weaknesses of the pastor image. First, it perceives the congregation as a collection of discrete individuals with personal needs and not as a collective, or a community with a mission. Concentrating much on individual hardships of life may fragment the church and lead to religious consumerism. Second, pastorally oriented sermons tend to concentrate on the hurts and needs of the people, forgetting that they also have strengths and abilities that they can bring to the congregation. Third, the

pastor image tends to concentrate on the immediate felt needs of the hearers, downplaying the past and the future of the congregation individually and collectively. This brings the misconception that the Christian faith has answers to all life's problems. Fourth, while the pastor's image seeks to place the hearer in focus it might end up doing the unintended act of putting the preacher in focus by portraying him/her as a powerful healer and therapist. Fifth, another weakness of the pastor image is that it runs the risk of reducing theology into anthropology by presenting the gospel merely as a resource for human emotional growth (Long 2005a:32-35; cf. Johnson 2015:34).

### **3.3.1.3 The preacher as a storyteller/poet**

Another metaphor that Tom Long uses for describing the preacher is a storyteller/poet. This theme focuses on the narrative dimension of the sermon and the poetic expression of language. Advocates of this metaphor argue that it can use a combination of the strongest traits of the preacher as herald and as pastor. The storytelling poet/preacher can give attention to the biblical text and the hearer's communicational needs. Essential traits by which a preacher as a storyteller/poet can be identified are first, more critical and effective use of illustrations, and second, the whole sermon being narratively structured. Third, the sermon's focus is on the imaginative experiences that can be communicated through poetic language (Johnson 2015:34).

The storyteller/poet metaphor is like the herald metaphor in the sense that the storyteller/poet is interested in the content of the gospel but does not divorce that content from the rhetorical forms in which it is found. Like the pastor, the storyteller/poet is concerned with the hearer but focuses on the listening process. In addition, like the pastor, the storyteller/poet puts a spotlight on the person of the preacher, but as a narrative artist. Furthermore, like the pastor, the storyteller/poet is most interested in what happens experientially to the hearer because of the sermon (Johnson 2015:35).

#### **Strengths of the storyteller/poet image**

The storyteller/poet image has several strengths as mentioned by Johnson (2015:35):

- It can attend to both the message of the gospel and the experience of the hearer.
- It utilises rhetoric in a way that is sensitive to the rhetorical form of the gospel.

- It helps to knit the individual and the community together by creating a common world in the experience of the story, in the sense that the church is understood as an active teller of the story and not simply a passive hearer.
- It uses a style that is interesting and memorable

### **Weaknesses of the storyteller/poet image**

One of the weaknesses of the storyteller/poet image is that it tends to underplay the non-narrative dimensions of Scripture. Even though largely the gospel is narrative, the biblical witness includes non-narrative texts that require a different rhetorical form. In addition, placing too much emphasis on the experiential dimension of the preaching event, specifically on measuring the success of a sermon by its effect on the listeners may not always be helpful (Johnson 2015:35).

#### **3.3.1.4 The preacher as a witness**

While the herald, the pastor and the poet/storyteller have been the master images depicting the preacher, Tom Long develops a metaphor of preaching as bearing witness. This view of the preacher has deep biblical roots. From the text in Isaiah 43:8 – 13, there are several points to note about the witness: The witness is not just a volunteer or someone coming forward to testify but is someone sent to testify. The witness's testimony is about nothing else except God. In addition, the purpose of the testimony is for all people, on their behalf and for them to believe. Furthermore, the testimony is not just about words but demands the total engagement of speech and action. The image of the preacher as a witness brings out the authority of the witness not based on their power or rank but because of what he/she has heard and seen (Long 2005a:45- 48).

The witness image embodies the way of approaching the Bible because the Scripture is itself a faithful witness to God's interaction with creation. Therefore, the congregation goes to the Scripture through the preacher to see and hear from God. The witness image carries with it the rhetorical form of preaching because the witness cannot use any words since the truth to which the witness testifies has its verbal form, which the witness must allow to emerge. The preacher as a witness is not a neutral observer since the witness testifies about something that he/she has experienced to some depth and is therefore involved in it. The witness image also underscores the ecclesiastical

and liturgical setting of preaching. That is, the church's worship is a dramatic enactment of the courtroom of God where Christ is the true witness when God judges all powers that destroy creation and enslave man (Long 2005a:48-50). In the witness metaphor, the congregation sends the preacher out to listen to the word of God and then bring the message back to the congregation (Stackhouse 2014: 133).

According to Johnson (2015:29-30), many homiletical proposals have used the metaphor of the preacher as a witness to understand the work of preaching and the identity of the preacher. In this case, three homiletical proposals, which share a strong family resemblance when seen from the perspective of the witness, are posited. These are Witness of Preaching (by Thomas G. Long), Preaching as Testimony (by Anna Carter Florence) and Confessing Jesus Christ (by David J. Lose). All these homiletical proposals understand the preacher as a type of witness and preaching as a form of witness, although there are many differences among them. The witness metaphor is regarded as the most appropriate way to understand and practice the ministry of preaching today when compared to other metaphors and in responding to contemporary cultural challenges.

In the *Witness of Preaching*, Tom Long allows the theological image of bearing witness to the gospel to govern and organise every aspect of the process of creating a sermon from beginning to end, and from the interpretation of the biblical text to the oral delivery of the sermon. In addition, the concept of the preacher as a witness can be extended in the direction of missional preaching. In that sense, the preacher is not only a witness but also a witness who equips the congregation with its witness (cf. Johnson 2015:29-31).

### **3.3.1.5 Preaching as bearing testimony**

The metaphor of the preacher as one bearing witness has a familial relationship with the image of the preacher as one bearing testimony. Preaching as testimony is a product of a feminist author, Anna Carter Florence. It emanated from the experiences of women preachers such as Anne Marbury Hutchinson (1591–1643), Sarah Osborn (1714–1796) and Jarena Lee. Their historical narratives show that each of these women described their preaching as “testimony” because during their time “preaching” was understood to be a liturgical activity reserved exclusively for men. In that androcentric context, these women could defend themselves by claiming that they

were testifying and not preaching. By testimony, Anna Carter Florence means both a narration of events and a confession of belief. That is, when one tells what they have seen and heard, and confesses what they believe about it (Johnson 2015:41-43).

Central to the view of preaching as testimony was authority in preaching. Traditionally, formal authority to preach was conferred by ordination and often predicated on formal education, both of which were customarily denied to women. Therefore, traditional understandings of authority in preaching were used to oppress women and prevent them from preaching (cf. Johnson 2015:42).

Preaching as witness asserts that preachers do not rely on outside authorities as proof of their words, but rather on the authority of the testimony. That is, what makes their sermons authoritative for their audiences is the depth of the preacher's engagement with the Scriptures and life itself. In contemporary situations, testimony is the key source of authoritative preaching. Hence Florence develops a homiletical proposal that understands preaching as testimony (cf. Johnson 2015:43).

### **3.3.1.6 Other metaphors of the preacher**

#### **The preacher a steward (housekeeper)**

A steward is a trustee and dispenser of another man's goods (Stott 1961:19). Although the Old Testament literature uses the term to mean servant, a steward is not an ordinary servant who simply takes orders. Rather, he/she is sort of a superior foreman, who must take decisions, give orders and take charge (Hall 1990:32). Theologically, the term is also used as a descriptive title for those who have the privilege of preaching the word of God, particularly ministers (Stott 1961:22). For instance, the Apostle Paul uses the term to refer to himself and Apollos when he wrote: "Let a man so consider us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1Corinthians 4:1-2). This metaphor is also used by the Apostle Peter when referring to believers as stewards of the manifold grace of God (1Peter 4:10).

Some of the characteristics of the steward/housekeeper (*oikonomos*) image are: First, a steward is under the authority of the owner of the house. God is the owner of the Church, and the preacher is under his authority, taking directives from him. Second,

the steward is entrusted with something (for instance, food), that does not belong to him/her. God has entrusted the preacher with his word (the mysteries of God) to pass on to the congregation. However, the food might sometimes need preparation before being served to the workers under the care of the steward. This brings in the idea of the pastoral image where the word has to be contextualised, to meet the needs of the hearers. Third, inherent in the steward/housekeeper image is the general oversight and management of the household as well as having at heart the welfare and interests of the workers under his/her care.

Furthermore, entailed in the words of the Apostle Paul are: First, the idea that people have to regard them (apostles), as stewards of God's mysteries. This serves to portray the preacher, not as a hero or someone with inherent power. Rather, a steward is a mere underling of Christ, charged with managing his household and dispensing his goods to other servants on his behalf. Second, as ministers, they are to be found faithful. Ministers are not only responsible for the welfare of the congregation, but they are to guard the goods entrusted to them against harm. In faithfulness, the steward is to discharge the responsibility of timeous and fair distribution of the resources. This will help him/her because in the end he/she will account to the house owner regarding how the resources were managed. For instance, in 2 Timothy 1:14, Timothy was charged to guard that which was committed to him (Stott 1961:24).

There are several potential strengths of stewardship as the image of a preacher: Stewardship is a source of the preacher's incentive. Since preaching is a challenging task, there are times when it might seem discouraging. However, the thought that one is doing the work on God's behalf and with the result of receiving a reward, serves as an incentive for the preacher. Stewardship indicates the source of the preacher's message. Mysteries of God (*mysterion*) are not dark unexplained enigmas, but God's open secrets, which are expressive of God's self-revelation, as embodied in the Scripture (Stott 1961:23). That is, the preacher does not have to seek for other man-made mysteries but has to stick to the already revealed secrets as found in God's word. In addition, entailed in the steward metaphor is the notion that the preacher's authority is not like that of the Old Testament prophets who would say "Thus says the LORD..." instead there is the indirect authority that lies in the word. Therefore, the preacher's authority lies in saying, "The Bible says..." Furthermore, stewardship



implies discipline in the studying of the word. The preacher must diligently and conscientiously study the word of God to be grounded in the truth that has to be passed on to the congregation (Stott 1961:29-30).

One of the weaknesses of the steward image is when the steward misunderstands his/her role, beginning to ill-treat the other servants, as Jesus portrayed in the parable in Matthew 24:48-51. The other downside would be the over-burdening and burnout of the preacher. This may happen when the preacher exaggerates the notion of stewardship, thus failing to share the work or delegate others who are capable of doing the work as well as he would do it.

### **The preacher as a teacher**

In as much as a rabbi in a synagogue was regarded as a communal teacher of the Law to be applied to practical living, the preacher as a teacher has such a responsibility. This responsibility entails giving an exposition of the biblical text such that it helps the hearer to understand the Scripture and the doctrinal and ethical implications of the Christian faith. This homiletic identity was described and encouraged by Augustine of Hippo who believed that the calling of a Christian preacher is to explain Scripture in a way that “teaches, delights and persuades” the hearer towards the ultimate end of life, which is the love of God (Johnson 2014:50-51).

Referring to John A. Broadus who was regarded as one of the champions of the importance of rhetoric in preaching, Johnson (2014:69-74) mentions that while the purpose of the preacher as a teacher is teaching and exhorting people out of the word of God, his/her language should be very clear. The preacher’s language should not only make it possible for hearers to understand him/her, but it should also make it impossible for them to misunderstand him/her. Flowing from the need for clarity in preaching is the form of the preacher’s sermon. While various sermonic forms can be used by the preacher as a teacher, the fundamental idea is that the sermon should expound the text in as understandable a way as possible. For this reason, this homiletic identity is often associated with deductive forms of preaching, since it encourages a logical organisation of rational thought.



## **The preacher as a liturgical artist**

Since preachers have a role in God's drama of salvation, they are called upon to present the gospel in ways that are creative and innovative. In addition, they are called upon to present the truth beautifully as they witness the work of Jesus Christ. In this sense, the preacher allows God to be Saviour, while he (God) uses the preacher's gifts. While this artistic work must be rooted in the truth of the gospel, both in matter and mode, others contend that it should also be based on notions of beauty and expression. However, art does not adhere to any canon of beauty but what the brain can conceive beyond any standard of beauty (Johnson 2014:134-135).

Important elements required of the preacher as a liturgical artist are, among others, performance, the context for preaching and the relationship between the preacher and the congregation. Furthermore, a preacher as a liturgical artist suggests the idea of someone who employs human gifts and capacities that have been redeemed in Christ and offers them back to the Father in gratitude (Johnson 2014:135-136).

### **3.3.2 The sermon**

A sermon is a truth strained through human personality. That is, the sermon is inseparable from the personality of the preacher. ,Therefore, in preaching it is equally important to work hard on the preacher's personality, as it is to work on preparing the sermon. This enhances the free flow of God's word from the preacher to the parishioners. Furthermore, according to John Knox, a sermon is an offering to God, a preacher offering him/herself to God, in which its preparation is a disciplined act of devotion. That is, as 2 Timothy 2:15 states the preacher must continuously present him/herself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, correctly handling the word of truth (cf. Kurewa 2000:173).

A sermon must not be confused with what the preacher may have written or what he/she is about to say. The sermon is an action that involves what the preacher speaks joined with what the rest of the congregation hears (Long 2005a:16).

#### **3.3.2.1 Sermon content**

There are several points to note about the sermon content and message. First, while the purposes for the messages may differ, the message should essentially bring

comfort and encouragement to the congregation. The message must enhance the optimistic view of life inherent in the Christian faith. The sermon content must infuse the human heart with hope. Second, the sermon must have a pastoral dimension in the sense that it encourages listeners to change their lives for the better. This could be done through a holistic approach to preaching such that all aspects of the person's humanity (emotional, social and spiritual) are addressed (Nhiwatiwa 2012:30-33).

### **3.3.2.2 Types of sermons**

While there is no one pattern to which preaching has to invariably conform, the shape of the sermon is not something inconsequential, because its shape contributes to what the preacher wishes to say and do. Various sermonic types can be identified, among which are topical, textual, and expository sermons (Eslinger 2002:31).

#### **Topical sermon**

A topical sermon is one in which a particular topic is interpreted from the perspective of the gospel, and which can be better addressed from the perspective of the gospel itself than from the exposition of a particular text of the Bible. Therefore, while a topical sermon may not necessarily be grounded in a biblical text, it seeks to be in harmony with the gospel witness. By "gospel witness" it means the life of Jesus Christ together with a working knowledge of the Christian tradition, including familiarity with the Bible and current theological reflection. From this viewpoint, it is necessary that in preaching a topical sermon, the preacher has to be armed with church tradition, theology and biblical studies Elliot (2000:58).

According to homileticians, there are several advantages and disadvantages of the topical sermon. One of the downsides is the fact that preachers of topical sermons have been lured into preaching material from newspapers rather than having newspapers writing what they as preachers have said. They have turned their pulpits into platforms and their sermons into lectures; and have veered into new intriguing subjects. However, in support of the topical sermon, other scholars assert that over the years, many successful sermons have been preached, though they were not explicitly based on a particular biblical text (Elliot 2000 57-58).

There are important points, which according to Elliot (2000:58-59), can serve as guidelines for the preacher of a topical sermon. Among them are the following:

- Determine whether the topic deals with real-life matters in which there is something at stake.
- Identify pre-associations with the topic and list everything you need to know about the topic.
- Search for biblical perspectives on the topic, that is, what other scriptural passages say about the topic.
- Trace how the topic has been dealt with in the history of the church.
- Focus on two theologians on the topic and then bring other documentation about the topic and investigate other relevant dimensions of the topic.
- Find out what your congregation's history about the topic is.
- Imagine what other people in a different situation would think, regarding the topic.
- Evaluate the topic theologically, state your own opinion on the topic, as well as views other than yours.
- Consider the mindset and situation of the listeners regarding the sermon and locate them in relation to your position on the topic.
- Ponder on the question: What should be the result of the listener's hearing of the sermon?

### **Textual sermon**

The structure of the traditional textual sermon corresponds with the sequence of the parts of the chosen text. The topic and main divisions of the sermon are drawn from a brief text of Scripture either directly or by inference. That is, the main divisions in this type of sermon may either be the exact words of the chosen text, or a set of words suggested by the chosen text. However, the functional elements, including scriptural support, explanation, argument, illustration and application, are partly taken from the text and partly from other portions of Scripture or other texts. Therefore, the basic principles in developing a textual sermon can be said to be: First, the subject of the textual sermon is presented through the text. Second, the text determines and dominates both the subject and the development thereof. Third, the sermon's functional element may be derived partly from the text, from other Scripture passages, and extra-biblical sources (Hwang 2004:71). This type of sermon differs from an expository sermon in that the portion of Scripture is usually smaller than the average expository sermon.

## **Expository sermon**

Expository preaching involves exposing and laying open the meaning of the text in its context. That is, it handles the text in such a way that its essential elements as they existed in the mind of the writer, and in the light of the overall context of Scripture, are clarified and applied to the existential needs of the hearers (Greidanus 1999:231). According to Elliot (2000:132-133), expository preaching is one of the oldest styles of preaching as it first appeared in the writings of the Qumran community's Dead Sea scrolls. Expository sermon involves verse-by-verse preaching and distinguishes itself from the topical sermon in that it unwaveringly begins and remains with the biblical text. However, Stackhouse (2014:138) mentions that expository preaching is not a line-by-line exegesis of the text, but rather it is uncovering the message of the text so that what the preacher does to the congregation is what the text did to its original hearers.

Several criticisms are levelled against this style of preaching, and it is sometimes referred to as a "Bible study clothed in the homiletical vestments" or the type of preaching best suited for radio preachers. However, to its credit, some of its supporters commend it for being a window through which the gospel can be looked at in relation to the congregation. Furthermore, the expository sermon helps the congregation to understand the Scripture in its particular context, thus developing knowledge of the Bible on the part of the congregation (Elliot 2000:133).

Among the important factors to consider in an expository sermon are: First, it has unity embodied in a theme. This theme assists the preacher in not meandering randomly through the sermon. Second, it uses few illustrations. Third, an expository sermon needs adequate time, and fourth, its goal is to compel listeners to decide to do what the word of God says (Elliot 2000:134).

Concerning the methodology of expositional preaching, Doran (2011:11) mentions the following fundamental elements: Theme, developmental ideas, structure, meaning, theology, outline, support material and sermon delivery.

In the first stage of developing the theme, the preacher must read and reread the text to establish what the eternal thematic truth communicated in the passage is. In the stage of Developmental ideas, the preacher ought to summarise the main ideas into

principle statements and explore the divinely ordained developmental ideas which support the theme. Then, in the structure, the preacher deals with the grammar of the text and establishes the relationships that the ideas in the text have to the theme and to each other. Beyond the first three stages, to bring forth the meaning of the text, the preacher ought to examine the interpretive issues within the text by finding out the meaning of each significant word and phrase in the thematic unit. The next stage will be the theology of the text, which is about correlating the passage's truth with the overall message of Scripture, and its relation to the unified message of God's Word. Then the preacher ought to construct a homiletical outline which is structured in a way that communicates the message of the passage to a contemporary audience. In the stage concerning the support material, the preacher establishes what should be said in support of each point within the sermon outline. Last, the sermon should be prepared and delivered in such a way that its contents are brought into transforming contact with the biblical message.

### **The essence of Expository preaching**

Central to expository preaching is the assertion that God gave his true word to be communicated in its entirety as he has given it, as “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 5:20; 20:27). That is, God’s word is to be dispensed precisely, without altering the message. The logic behind this perception is that the Scripture is perfect and therefore sufficient in itself. This sufficiency of Scripture requires that it be treated with a faithful expository proclamation. In this way, the Scripture text does not only influence the sermon, but should also determine the essence of the sermon, in content, structure, and spirit (Smith 2008:135).

Expository preaching attempts to reflect the mind of God. Therefore, in expository preaching, there should never be a time when God is not represented. A sermon should not be in the main, human opinion, otherwise, it cannot speak the mind of God. Hence the need for faithful exposition which represents the word of God, just as Christ faithfully represented the mind of God. This is in contrast to the New Homiletic whose concerns seem largely anthropocentric. The problem of the New Homiletic is that while it takes very seriously what is on the mind of man, it subjugates the understanding of the mind of God. While true expository preaching understands the mind of men, it seeks first to uncover the mind of God (Smith 2008:139).

In addition, linked to expository preaching is the idea of Christology of preaching, in the sense that expository preaching is faithful to the text for the very reason that the text speaks of Christ. Therefore, in explaining the words of the Word, the preacher is explaining the Son of God himself, who is the true revelation of God (Smith 2008:145).

### **3.3.3 The Scripture**

“The word of God is the word that God spoke, speaks and will speak in the midst of all men. Regardless of whether it is heard or not, it is, in itself, directed to all men, ... The man who refuses to listen and to obey the Word acts not as a free man but as a slave, for there is no freedom except through God’s Word” (Barth 1963:18-19).

In emphasising the importance of the Scripture in human life, Brueggemann (1989:4), argues that the biblical text has a generative power that can summon and evoke new life in the hearers. This is because the biblical text is prophetic and summons realities that are beyond day-to-day life. The biblical text serves as a guarantee that beyond the world of ideological reductionism and technological naivete, there is still a possibility of prophetic construals of another world, worth doing and received by those who live in despair and resignation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s words about the importance of the Scripture in preaching are worth noting: “The sermon is concrete, ... only when God’s word is really in it. God alone is the *concretissimum*.” Without the factuality of the Bible, all that preachers do will be to create people according to their ideals rather than according to the image of God (cf. Stackhouse 2014:23).

#### **3.3.3.1 The use of Scripture in contemporary preaching**

In the past, the use of the Scripture involved first, that the preacher would turn to the text and withdraw its internal meanings and then turn to the congregation to apply the text to the current situation. The order was unchangeably from the text to the situation. In this regard, the preacher was careful not to pollute the purity of the text by inadvertently introducing foreign elements. However, the advent of feminist, liberationist and postmodernist hermeneutical methods in recent times has led preachers to abandon the text-to-situation method in preference to other rival methods. Instead of one clear path from text to sermon, multiple paths have developed as a result of the rapid change in the landscape of biblical hermeneutics (Long 2005c:34).

Conscientious biblical preachers share the idea that the classical text-to-sermon exegetical methods do not produce as much good as it is intended. The problem inherent therein is for the preacher to bridge the gap between the historical circumstances of the ancient text and the urgency of the contemporary situation. In most cases, bridging this ever-widening chasm is done through an analogy (the claim that something in the historical circumstances of the text is like something in our world). However, an analogy is somehow deceptive because we are not just like the characters of the times of the ancient text, nor are our situations much like theirs (Long 2005c:35-37).

While engagement with the Scripture can yield meanings for contemporary life, not all Scripture has a ready and apparent meaning for contemporary life. However, between the ancient text and contemporary life lies an act of imagination on the part of the interpreter. This juncture between human imagination and textual interpretation forms an important part of contemporary biblical hermeneutics for the preacher. This image of the preacher, together with the image of the authors who compiled the text, form an important characteristic of recent biblical interpretation. It is important to note that biblical texts do not have stable meanings that have to be transported into the present, but that the connection between the ancient biblical text and the contemporary world is not procedural but poetic, not mechanical but metaphoric. The meaning of the text for today “is not lying there in the text itself, waiting to be uncovered, but it is given only when the interpreter brings together the ancient text and the present situation, with the spark of imagination between them (Long 2005c: 37-39).

Perceiving the entire process of text-to-sermon as imagination is helpful to the preacher in the sense that: First, if preachers recognise that listeners are creative in their listening, then preachers will be freed from exercising undue control over or expecting precise results from what is heard in the sermon. Therefore, preachers do not have to fear eisegesis by listeners. Second, this interactive character of biblical interpretation has support in recent biblical hermeneutics on the role of the reader. The reader does not engage in a linear interaction with the text as bits of processed information, but engages in an active and creative process with the text, negotiating the gaps and passageways, and moving back and forth with the text (Long 2005c:38)



### **3.3.3.2 The authority of the Bible**

Christians take the Bible to be authoritative in matters of ethics. The implication of this regarding the residence of authority is that authority lies behind the text, in the text and the reading and the embodying of the text (Wells & Quash 2010:3).

#### **The authority of the Bible lies behind the text**

With regard to the authority of the Bible lying behind the text, three views can be noted, namely, the conservative view, the liberal view and the pragmatic view. The conservative view is that the Holy Spirit accounted for the writing of the text and therefore the Bible is accurate and sometimes infallibly accurate. This view does not take into consideration the significance of the words and events and the accuracy of the record thereof. The liberal view sees the true significance being in the patterns of life represented in the scriptural record such as the New Testament being an ethic of loving one another. Between the two views is the pragmatic approach that ascribes the authority of the text to the fact that it is the best or the only witness that we have about God. This approach engages itself more with the social forms or communities that appear in the text than the accuracy of the scriptural narrative (Wells & Quash 2010:3 - 4).

#### **The authority of the Bible lies in the text**

This perspective believes that authors of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the text and that it has power in itself regardless of who reads it. Again, three views arise in this regard. The first is that the Bible text is a holy and an incomparable source of the truth. In addition, the Bible is perspicuous, (that is, it has a single plain meaning that is accessible to any reader in any context). The second approach is canonical criticism. Here, interest is in how the books of the Bible were brought together into the canon of 66 books. The third perspective is the philosophical approach. This approach departs from the assertion that the only valid way of interpreting the text is through identifying with the author's original intention. This approach holds that in scriptural interpretation the text might have several legitimate meanings and that the text may take a life of its own long after the author had written it (Wells & Quash 2010:4-5).

### **The authority of the Bible lies in the reading and the embodying of the text**

This approach asserts that the authority of the text does not lie in the text, its history or correct reading but rather in living the text faithfully and in following in its steps. In this regard what matters most for Christians is not to have an accurate text, but to be a faithful community of believers (Wells & Quash 2010:5-6).

### **The authority of the Bible lies in the Church and in divine inspiration**

The assertion that the Bible is a book of the Church and therefore its authority lies in the Church emanates from the fact that it was the Church that called the councils that eventually decided which books were to be accepted in the canon of the Bible. On the other hand, the belief that the Bible is divinely inspired, and therefore its authority lies in this inspiration, is commonly held throughout the world, although there are challenges regarding the interpretation of how the inspiration was communicated to the authors of the books (Kurewa 2000:97-98).

#### **3.3.3.3 The centrality of Scripture in preaching**

The centrality of Scripture in preaching implies that preaching transcends the simple task of passing on knowledge because preaching is *sacramentum verbi* (the sacrament of the word). This makes preaching not just part of the cult or liturgy of the church, but an encounter with the living Christ. The centrality of Scripture in preaching means that the preacher's task is not to apply the word, but to give way for the word to do its work unimpeded. There are impediments to the centrality of Scripture in preaching, such as obsession with relevance, a penchant for rhetoric and reliance on illustrations. While there is fundamentally nothing wrong with these aspects of preaching, preachers are urged "to have confidence in the power of Scripture to deliver its message as well as its form" (Stackhouse 2007:21-33).

#### **3.3.4 The congregation**

The congregation is one of the key elements in preaching. While the older students of preaching were concerned with how preachers were fascinated with the techniques of secular rhetoric, it has become clear that the essence of the gospel carries with it the concern for how people hear the message (Long 2005b:14-15).

According to Malmstrom (2014:1), most forms of contemporary preaching advocate the role of the listeners, who are seen as co-constructors of the sermon. For this purpose, preachers should respond through the use of metadiscourse. This is a framework for understanding preaching not primarily as gospel proclamation but as a form of social and communicative engagement between preacher and congregation. This social communicative engagement assumes an awareness by the preacher that the sermon is a discourse which imposes certain social and communicative constraints on both preachers and listeners with regard to, for instance, preacher–listener status, power, and authority (Malmstrom 2014:4). Metadiscourse entails linguistic expressions with a dual purpose. First, to guide the listeners through the sermon by adding to the overall cohesion and coherence of the sermon, and second, to help involve listeners in the argument made in the sermon. This could be done mainly through expressing a preacher's stance or projecting variable points of view (Malmstrom 2014:1).

Different congregations can be located at various positions on the context continuum. One end of the context continuum is when the listeners are content-focused and the other end is when listeners are preacher-focused. These two ends of the context continuum are marked by the answers to the question: “Does authority come from the careful exposition of the Bible text or from the Holy Spirit working through the preacher as she/he preaches the text?” (Hussey 2015:19). Therefore, preachers have to carefully consider the context in which their preaching occurs because congregations, such as Pentecostal, Baptist, Lutheran, and Anglican traditions have different expectations of their preachers. Different traditions place the congregations at different places of the context continuum. Therefore, practitioners have to adapt their preaching style to each particular congregational context. In addition, each congregation within the Christian faith has its stages of development, likes and dislikes, as well as strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the nature of the message will depend upon the understanding of a given congregation (Nhiwatiwa 2012:30). Preachers have the responsibility to shape the expectations of the congregations to which they minister (Hussey 2015:19).

In understanding the congregation, the preacher does not have to deal with the socio-economic and environmental surroundings of that congregation only, but also with

congregational dynamics going on as the sermon progresses. The preacher has to deal with the different modes of interacting with the sermon by the congregation. Some congregants will interact with the sermon in an auditory manner, while others will interact intellectually and still others emotionally. Therefore, the preacher must have a balanced way of catering for all the different ways of interacting with the sermon. In addition, for various reasons congregants drift in and out of the sermon as they listen. This happens because some listeners have domestic distractions, while others wander through a series of thoughts triggered by some idea in the sermon (Nhiwatiwa 2012:88-89).

### **Congregational exegesis**

In the preaching practice, congregational exegesis is crucial for several reasons: First, it exposes the preacher to the multidimensional reality of the members of the congregation. Therefore, the preacher has to be able to address them with respect and understanding, and not as he/she imagines or perceives them to be. Second, congregational exegesis enhances the preacher's consideration of the cares, dreams, heartaches and questions that the faith community bring to the preaching event. Third, knowing where the congregation is about values and beliefs, assists the preacher to bring a transformative theology to the congregation's existential situation. Fourth, by understanding the congregation's worldview from their vantage point, the preacher can assist them in the task of envisioning their daily lives following the gospel (Tisdale 2008:75-76). According to Nhiwatiwa (2012:14), this "contextual awareness of the congregation" is an important element in preaching. This is because as Long (2005b:14) states, no sermon could be adequately prepared without keeping in view the real persons who would hear the sermon.

One other factor in congregational exegesis is cultural intelligence. The importance of cultural intelligence in preaching is underscored by Kim's (2017:3) words: "Like the sides of an incomplete Rubik's Cube, preachers survey the checkerboard of eclectic people sitting in the pews, trying to make sense of how they can integrate the disparate pieces of their hearers' lives into a clear contextualised and unified message." Cultural intelligence is the capability to deal effectively with other people with whom one does not share a common cultural background and understanding. Cultural intelligence makes preaching to be a bridge-building exercise (Kim 2017:4).

Cultural intelligence, also referred to as Cultural Quotient (CQ) theory, has four stages. First is the Cultural Quotient Drive. This is the motivational dimension of CQ, which is the leader's/preacher's level of interest, drive, and energy to adapt cross-culturally. This enables the preacher to go beyond only knowing the congregants' names and professions but to also consider how they think, how they live and the cultures and subcultures they most identify with. The second stage concerning cultural intelligence in homiletics is the cognitive dimension of CQ, which is CQ Knowledge. In this regard, the preacher seeks to know about his listeners' culture and how it affects preaching. The third stage of cultural intelligence is CQ Strategy. This is the metacognitive dimension of CQ, which is the strategy used by the preacher when crossing cultures. The fourth stage is the behavioural dimension of CQ. This is the preacher's ability to act appropriately in a range of cross-cultural situations (Kim 2017:5-8).

By being culturally intelligent, a preacher becomes a bridge-builder between the world of the Bible and today's world, as demanded by the preacher's vocation. The Apostle Paul corroborates this when he writes: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). Cultural intelligence enables the preacher to understand the various cultures and subcultures of his/her congregants to address their needs with empathy (cf. Kim 2017:8).

Mulligan & Allen (2009:4) (cf. Hussey 2015:3-4) identify the twelve most frequently mentioned qualities that listeners find engaging in sermons. These qualities were identified through the use of the three major categories: That is, logos (how listeners find ideas engaging), ethos (how the congregation's perception of the character of the preacher affects their hearing of the message), and pathos (how do feelings generated by the sermon play into the ways listeners receive the message):

- The sermon should deal in a foundational way with what God offers and asks.
- The preacher's life should be consistent with the church's deepest theological convictions.
- Preachers should speak from their own experience.
- The sermon should be Bible-centered and make the biblical material alive for the listener.
- The message should relate in a practical way to the lives of the listening communities.

- The sermon should be short (although shortness is relative).
- Preachers need to be clear and easy to understand.
- Congregations are eager for sermons to help them make theological and ethical sense of the range of their existential issues.
- Listeners do not want the preacher to tone down the sermon; rather, they want to wrestle meaningfully with important issues.
- Preachers ought to help congregations draw out the implications of the Bible and their deepest theological convictions.
- Preachers need to be lively in embodying the sermon, talk expressively and be audible enough, connect with the congregation through eye contact, and speak with appropriate movements of the hands, arms, and body.

### **3.4 Pentecostal preaching**

Preaching has played a crucial role in the Pentecostal movement and occupies a significant place therein. This is partly because of the prominence of orality in the Pentecostal tradition. This prominent role of orality originated from the African American oral context of Pentecostal preaching, which goes further back to the first Christian communities. These Charismatic communities emphasised hearing, and not reading. As such, the orality of Pentecostalism has led to a celebration of preaching as a mode of divine revelation, in which preachers are authoritative interpreters of Scripture. In addition, preachers were formulators of basic theology for their congregations, which consisted mostly of uneducated members (White 2016:124-125).

Pentecostal preaching emphasises two important elements, namely, the value of the written word, and the Spirit's work in the preacher and the midst of the congregation. It is in the interplay and balance of these two elements that Pentecostal preaching takes place. In this sense, it is the active involvement of God through the Spirit in preaching, that distinguishes it from mere speech (Nel 2017:2867).

In Pentecostal preaching, the process of sermon delivery shares some distinct features which are not often found outside Pentecostal churches today. The most noticeable feature is the active participation of the audience during preaching. The audience expresses their agreement with the preacher by voicing an 'Amen!' or

'Halleluyah!' As such, Pentecostal preaching becomes responsive, dialogical and lively. In both its content and form, Pentecostal preaching creates a sense of expectancy, and God's immanent presence is often felt strongly. Even a call for Christian service and ministry is made with urgency. Another general characteristic of Pentecostal preaching is the frequent use of illustrations drawn from the Scripture and contemporary life episodes. Sometimes, the entire sermon takes a narrative form. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for a preacher to diverge from his or her original sermon outline, in sensitivity to being 'led by the Spirit' (Ma & Ma 2010:155-156).

While the concepts, structures and methodologies of Pentecostal hermeneutics are generally the same as those of non-Pentecostals, there are a few factors that form the unique element in Pentecostal preaching. For Pentecostals, the sermon invites the listener to experience the immediacy, power and truth of the word of God being proclaimed. For instance, a message about healing in a Pentecostal church invites listeners to experience the present healing power of Christ who still heals today. This illustrates the Pentecostals' approach to revelation, hermeneutic and proclamation. In the Pentecostal tradition, a unique emphasis on the preaching event can be described in terms of three different elements: First, God's work in preaching, second, the preparation of the preacher for the ministry of preaching, and third, the preaching event itself (Nel 2017:288-289).

### **God's work in preaching**

According to Nel (2017:289), while Pentecostals agree that all believers receive an endowment of the Spirit, which empowers them in preaching the gospel effectively, they assert that non-Pentecostals will not be as bold and spiritually 'connected' as Pentecostals are. They believe that Spirit baptism brings a special endowment of power that can be traced back to the events of the Day of Pentecost, as shown in Chapter 2 of the Book of Acts. The power of the Holy Spirit enables the preacher to preach with evidence of supernatural results. In this sense, Pentecostals believe that their preaching would be more powerful and effective than the preaching of somebody who has not experienced the baptism of the Spirit.



## **Preparation of the preacher for the ministry of preaching**

For most Pentecostal denominations, one of the preconditions for entrance into the ministry is that the preacher must be able to witness his/her call. A divine call for the preacher serves as the beginning of a new life dedicated to the preaching ministry. This call is interpreted by the church and the individual as divine authorisation and ordination for ministry. This call must always necessarily include the experience of Spirit baptism, which is seen as the encounter that transforms the believer as well as being an initial sign of being led by the Spirit (Nel 2017:292). A true characterisation of a Pentecostal preacher begins with his/her experience, of baptism in the Spirit (Ma & Ma 2010:149).

In addition, this baptism by the Spirit ensures that the revelation and truth of Christ, are accompanied by the supernatural demonstration of his power, necessary for the preacher. It is also necessary that a preacher's life should be grounded in prayer. However, it should be remembered that the amount of time spent in prayer does not necessarily determine the level of anointing in preaching. Furthermore, it is expected of the preacher to maintain a healthy spiritual life, to be continually filled with the Spirit, to display the fruit of the Spirit and to be in continual communication with God (Nel 2017:293).

## **The preaching event itself**

From a Pentecostal point of view, one of the indicators that the preaching event has been successful is the results in terms of people being converted, the sick getting healed, and believers being encouraged and edified. This has its precedents in the NT apostolic preaching as shown in Acts 3:2-8; 4:30 and Acts 8:6-7. Other manifestations of the success of the preaching event are Spirit baptism, miracles and the manifestation of gifts of the Spirit. These signs serve as some kind of hermeneutical criterion for Pentecostal preaching and teaching. Without supernatural results preaching is not deemed effective (Nel 2017: 297).

There is a perception in Pentecostal circles that preaching should show the reality of the text that has been read. However, the downside of this is that preachers are sometimes tempted to manipulate the context of the Scripture to gain desired results. At times they use emotionalism to get people to respond to the altar call. This leads to

preachers losing sight of the fact that preaching does not always lead to immediate results. Rather, the results of preaching may often become evident after some time (Nel 2017: 297-298).

In the Pentecostal tradition, the church is a community of prophets. Therefore, prophecy does not emerge from or through individuals but from within the body of Christ. In this regard, the preacher becomes one prophet among many as stated in Joel 2:28–30 (Nel 2017:298; Asamoah-Gyadu: 2007:392).

### **3.4.1 Proclamation and manifestation in Pentecostal worship**

There is a long-standing connection between proclamation and manifestation in Pentecostal worship. Believers experience the divine presence through hearing the word of God, praising, praying and other ways of involvement. This has its roots in the narrative of Acts when one hundred and twenty disciples assembled in one place, and the Holy Spirit descended upon them. Another Bible narrative is that of the amazing ‘Gentile Pentecost’ which took place at Cornelius’ home when Peter spoke the word of God (Acts 10). The Holy Spirit was poured upon them and they spoke in tongues. Similarly, Pentecostal worship is characterised by a connection between the proclamation of the gospel and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Ma & Ma 2010:149).

In Pentecostal circles the proclamation of the word, which is sometimes regarded as ‘Pentecostal preaching’ or ‘Holy Ghost preaching’ there are several characteristic features:

#### **Experiencing God now**

In Pentecostal life, people are expected to experience God’s presence through singing, testimonies and prayer, as well as in preaching. Experiencing God can refer to being charged emotionally, being baptised in the Spirit, or experiencing physical healing. Many Pentecostal sermons deal with life-related issues such as illness, poverty, family problems, business and relationships. Pentecostal believers are often motivated to seek God’s help more than the so-called mainline denominational believers. This present-day orientation may be a contrast to the early Pentecostal mission movement, which understood itself as an eschatological reality. This

orientation towards life-related issues is not only stressed in sermons, but also in the altar service after the preaching. As an essential part of preaching, the altar service provides an opportunity for the audience to respond to the message. The most frequent invitation to the altar area is for salvation, healing, commitment/dedication, the baptism of the Spirit, praying over life's problems, blessing, business, children, marriage life and other existential challenges (Ma & Ma 2010:153).

### **The content of Pentecostal sermons**

Regarding sermons, Pentecostal preachers have endeavoured to proclaim Christian truth as it was historically upheld by the Church. However, there are aspects of sermons distinct and common to Pentecostal preaching today, which differ from what was preached at the start of the Pentecostal movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Today's Pentecostal sermons can vary from one socio-cultural environment to another. Several common topics (such as prosperity and healing), are unique to today's Pentecostal preaching (Ma & Ma 2010:151).

### **Pentecostal use of the Scripture**

Pentecostals have in many ways inherited the conservative approach to the Scripture. They do not subscribe to higher criticism of the Scriptures. The Scripture records are accepted as fact unquestionably. Over and above their undivided loyalty to the authority of the word, Pentecostals have unshakable confidence in God's power to repeat ancient miracles in the lives of present-day believers. In as much as they believe in the literal fulfilment of all the prophecies regarding Christ's first coming, as well as the promises of justification and sanctification, they also believe in the promises of healing for today's believers. The word of God and its authority are central to Pentecostal preaching (Ma & Ma 2010:150).

In addition, Pentecostals' view of the centrality of Scriptures is observed in their understanding of interpretations of tongues and prophecy. For Classical Pentecostals, their experience of tongues and prophecy must always be aligned with Scripture and not contradict anything already directly revealed in the Bible. For them, tongues and prophecy do not constitute a new revelation in addition to biblical truth. Rather, they are a special way of emphasising biblical truth or providing guidance to existential situations. Since Pentecostals believe in the timelessness and universal application of

God's word, they believe that the miracle-working God of ancient believers is the same God of today's believers. In Pentecostal preaching, the approach to the Scripture is non-dispensational and therefore, God's intervention is freely proclaimed and expected. Furthermore, Pentecostal preaching frequently uses narratives. This is not just for theological reasons, but also for application at a more existential level. Characters in biblical narratives are used to identify with the personal lives of Christian believers (Ma & Ma 2010:151).

Furthermore, regarding manifestation in Pentecostal worship, there is a high expectancy of God's intervention or his immanent presence. As a result, there is often a manifestation of various spiritual gifts through different members of the congregation. Two important aspects of spiritual gifts are crucial in the lives of believers. First, the presence of the spiritual gifts themselves is a strong sign of God's presence and work among his people. Through these gifts, there is a recognition that God still works among his people in the present day. In other words, God communicates his presence in a non-verbal way through gifts such as healing and the working of miracles. Second, God reveals and shows his will to his children through the manifestation of the gifts by adapting to a specific individual, church and mission setting (Ma & Ma 2010:156).

### **3.4.2 General characteristics of Pentecostal preaching**

According to Nel (2017:288) while the concepts, structures and methodologies of other confessions that are not Pentecostal provide a great deal of material utilised in Pentecostal homiletics, there are distinctive characteristics of Pentecostal homiletics as stated below:

- Pentecostals emphasise that the goal of preaching is not to stimulate listeners intellectually or entertain them but to transform their affections, leading to a new lifestyle (Nel 2017:294).
- Pentecostals' message focus on the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This culminates in the manifestation of the Spirit, such that believers live from Jesus' daily presence (Nel 2017:296).
- Critical to Pentecostal preaching is the correct biblical theology driven by the power of the Holy Spirit so that as Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 2:1–5, the listeners' faith will not rest in the wisdom of men but the power of God (Nel 2017:296).

- Another element of importance in Pentecostal preaching is the delivery style. The effectiveness of sermons depends partly on the preacher's style, which involves the arrangement of thoughts, use of voice and gesture, and ways to involve listeners. Pentecostal preaching is normally delivered with passion and affective language. Their use of passionate language and unconventional methods led to Pentecostal preachers being characterised as fanatics. However, more recently their style of delivery is changing (Nel 2017:299-300).

### **3.5 PREACHING IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT**

There is a perception that in Africa, nothing took place regarding preaching until the arrival of the missionaries in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, some preaching events probably occurred before the 18<sup>th</sup> century and have not been popularly acknowledged. For instance, North Africa, which is the birthplace of such great Church Fathers as Origen, Tertullian and Augustus was a place of great theology and preaching, which later on shaped the Christian Church for several centuries. Unfortunately, that work did not last long. It was only later that European and American missionary efforts brought Christianity back to Africa (Ajibade n.d. :1-2).

According to (Ajibade n.d. :2-3), preaching in Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, can be broken into the following periods: The period of denominationalism and missionary activities, the period of evolution of Independent Churches, the period of Indigenous African Churches and the period of Charismatic Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. All these periods saw different kinds of preachers for their generations. The period of denominationalism and missionary activities was the period when European and American missionaries came and opened mission stations among the African people. This happened shortly after the abolition of the slave trade. At this time, these missionaries preached among people of different languages through the use of interpreters and learning of the different indigenous languages.

The period of evolution of Independent Churches in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century began as protest movements, as the indigenous people felt they were marginalised by foreign missions. Discriminatory practices by white church leaders led to the establishment of African-led churches (Ajibade n.d.:3).

Next came the period of Indigenous African Churches between the 1920s and 1940s. The formation of these churches was a reaction against the practice of the Western-oriented churches which sought to evangelise Africa by their methods. These churches are also called the Aladura, or the African Instituted Churches. These churches can be classified as the Ethiopian (those which emphasised independence while remaining an essential part of their parent church doctrines and practices), and the Zionists (those which emphasised the work of the Holy Spirit and entertain various forms of revelation and healing). Some of the preachers that emerged during this period include, among others, Moses Orimolade and Christianah Abiodun Akinsowo; Sophia Odunlami and J. B. Shadare of Faith Tabernacle; David Odubanjo, I. B. Akinyele and Joseph Ayo Babalola of Christ Apostolic Church and Joseph Osintelu (Church of the Lord, Aladura) (Ajibade n.d.:4).

The fourth period is that of Charismatic Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. After the increase in the population of Christians as a result of the revivals of the 1930s, there came a time when some Christians began to regroup into religious societies as Evangelical Christian groups or churches. This happened in revolt against some church practices which were considered antithetic to Christianity. From the 1970s, there was a strained relationship between the youths and established churches as they got more exposed to university education, foreign education in Europe and America and the influence of American evangelists and literature on the continent. This led to the proliferation of churches and 'ministries'. Consequently, a new set of preachers emerged. Among them were Benson Idahosa, Enoch Adejare Adebayo, W. F. Kumuyi, David Oyedepo, Francis Wale Oke, Mike Okonkwo, Ayo Oritsejafor, Nicholas Duncan-Williams, Charles Agyin-Asare, and several others in the continent (Ajibade n.d.:5).

While Kurewa (2000:76) affirms that according to the Communication Contracts Theory, the communication process has four essential factors, namely, speaker, speech, audience and occasion, he argues that in applying this theory to the African situation, certain adjustments can be made, since in the African context the occasion is rarely different from the contextual situation or audience/congregation. Therefore, since preaching falls under the category of communication, combining the occasion and the

congregation comes up with the preacher-centred, message-centred and congregation and contextual situation-centred definitions of preaching.

In the preacher-centred definition of preaching the key questions to answer about the preacher are: Who is he/she? Who sent him/her? In addition, the preacher must understand the customs and traditions of the people to whom he has been sent. In this case, the success of the preaching depends on the credibility of the preacher. In the message-centred preaching, two points stand out. The first is that the word of God assumes a central position in preaching. That is, preaching is the manifestation of the incarnate word from the written word, by the spoken word. Second, is that preaching aims at revealing God to people. That is, it is God's self-revelation to people. In this sense, preaching becomes 'speech by God rather than speech about God.' Regarding congregation and situation-centred definition, preaching should first be defined and understood from the congregation's point of view. Furthermore, in this view of preaching, people are expected to respond to God's word since every message from God has a purpose for the hearers (Kurewa 2000:76-83).

### **3.5.1 The message in the African pulpit**

Several issues are to be addressed by preaching in the African context. These include the notions of community, superstition and the prophetic message. First, the community is not just a biblical concept, but it is also a vivid characteristic of African culture. If the pulpit considers the communal nature of African people, it assists them to maintain their culture. It also assists them to resist the pressures brought by industrialisation and urbanisation, with the accompanying lifestyle of unbridled individualism. The sense of community among the African people is manifested by the way they spent time with each other in communion. The time they spend together is not regarded as time wasted (Nhiwatiwa 2012:33).

The second aspect to be considered in African preaching is superstition. Since this is inherent in the belief system of African people, communities thrive on gossip and suspicious foundations of mistrust of one another. While the issue of superstition should be addressed urgently, it should be tackled carefully, because simply castigating this belief system without weighing its dimensions, might exacerbate it rather than help the community (Nhiwatiwa 2012:35-36).



Third, there is a necessity for prophetic preaching on the African pulpit, as a message that draws its inspiration from a prophetic theology. For example, the Church in South Africa, challenged the injustices of the apartheid government (Nhiwatiwa 2012:33).

### **3.5.2 The challenges facing the African preacher's preparation of a sermon**

There are several challenges encountered by an African preacher regarding sermon preparation. One of the challenges is the habit and tradition of impromptu speaking. Impromptu speaking is the ability and skill that enhances one's oral delivery. Africans as being generally impromptu speakers, tend to rely more on this skill than on the thorough preparation of sermons. In addition, in the African context, preachers, especially those in rural areas, are usually over-worked, by visiting parishioners, and walking on foot, such that they do not have sufficient time for sermon preparation. The other challenge is the lack of education and resources including homiletic tools for crafting sermons, which are usually available to a Western preacher. Even pastors trained in the seminary depend only on the textbooks they used in training and cannot afford other books to enhance their sermon preparation. As a result, sermons are shallow content-wise and lack evidence of the seriousness of preparation to engage both the mind and heart of the listener. (Nhiwatiwa 2012:12-13).

### **3.5.3 Lessons to be learnt from the history of preaching in Africa**

Contemporary preachers can learn some vital lessons from the history of preaching in Africa. One of the lessons is the need for documentation of sermons. It has often been difficult to access sermons by African preachers, except recently, due to the use of the internet. This has hindered attempts at getting a good history of African Christian preaching. This may be attributed to the low literacy levels of some of the preachers of the past. It is good that preachers write their sermons and have books in their sermon collection for use by future generations (Ajibade n.d.:11-12).

The other lesson is to remember and put to use the three essential elements of Greek rhetoric. These elements are indispensable for effective communication and especially preaching. They are *logos* (the quality of the content of the message); *ethos* (quality of life of the preacher); and *pathos* (the passion with which the message is presented). Some African preachers of the past such as Sunday Adelaja (1967- ) of Nigeria; Simon Kibangu (1889-1951) of the Central Congo and Nicholas Bhengu (1909-1985) of

South Africa demonstrated these three qualities and are held in high esteem for that. However, the aspect of *logos* can be problematic for many African preachers. This is attributable to the dearth of real exposition in their sermons when critically examined. In addition, the aspect of *ethos* has become a problem for some Pentecostal preachers (Ajibade n.d.:12).

There is also, the lesson to preach with an understanding that there is no alternative to preaching if God is to continue changing human lives. In every generation, God raises men and women to preach and thereby changing people's lives and strengthening the church. It is also necessary that African preachers should understand the nature of fellow Africans. They have to avoid some diabolic practices which are considered to compromise the Christian faith. This is one of the reasons for the rise of African Independent Churches. In addition, this has led to the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements drawing many away from mainline Evangelical churches and also affecting their structure and content of worship (Ajibade n.d.:12-13).

### **3.6 THE PREACHING OF NICHOLAS BHEKINKOSI HEPWORTH BHENGU**

While many African Pentecostal preachers had a huge impact on their countries and Church denominations, this study deems it fit to explore the preaching of Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu (the founder of the AOG (BTG)) because this study explores preaching and Christology in the AOG (BTG).

#### **3.6.1 Nicholas Bhengu's three theological schools of thought**

According to Lephoko (2010:84-85), Nicholas Bhengu's preaching and theology were influenced by at least three theological schools of thought, namely, Lutheranism, Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism.

##### **Lutheranism**

Nicholas Bhengu grew up in the Lutheran church and he was influenced by five of Martin Luther's doctrines, that is, *Sola Scriptura*, justification by faith, the Law and the gospel, attitude towards authorities and human free will. Nicholas Bhengu had a strong view that the Bible has supreme authority (*Sola Scriptura*), and neither the Church nor the Pope had the authority that could militate against its authority. The Scripture as God's Word has the power, authority and infallibility of God.

Like Martin Luther, Bhengu believed in justification by faith. Luther had the conviction that man is justified by God as mentioned in Romans 1:17: “For in the gospel the righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith” (Lephoko 2010:85).

The other aspect of Lutheranism that influenced Nicholas Bhengu was “The Law and the Gospel”. According to Martin Luther, the Law relates to ‘all statements of Scripture that uncover the sins of humans and accuse them. In contrast, the gospel includes all statements that promise comfort, redemption and the grace of God.’ Martin Luther asserted that anyone who can make a proper distinction between the two could be regarded as a theologian. Furthermore, Luther’s attitude towards authorities influenced Nicholas Bhengu. Luther’s conviction was that temporal authority was from God and was necessary for the maintenance of external order, which the Church needed for its existence. Last, Bhengu believed in the concept of human free will. Luther believed that human free will was based on the acceptance of the fact that Christ had redeemed mankind, and not as claimed by others that human free will is that power with which humans can turn toward or away from God (cf. Lephoko 2010:85).

### **Evangelicalism**

Bhengu became influenced by the evangelical school of thought when he studied at Kwa Dumisa Bible College (later called Union Bible Institute), in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. He believed in the fundamentals of Evangelicalism. Among these fundamentals was the transforming work of God in people’s lives through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This results in a life of repentance, worship and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. However, he was unhappy with the Evangelicals’ opposition to the Pentecostal message of speaking in tongues (Lephoko 2010:86).

### **Pentecostalism**

From a Pentecostal point of view, Bhengu was influenced by the Emmanuel Mission, founded by HC Phillips and the Assemblies of God. His first contact with Pentecostalism was in Kimberley where he was converted under the ministry of two white American Full Gospel Church evangelists. Thereafter he was raised under the guardianship of Rev Job Chiliza, who was at that time a minister of the Full Gospel Church of God in Durban (Lephoko 2010:86).

### 3.6.2 Characteristics of Bhengu's teaching and preaching

According to Lephoko (2010:103), Bhengu's preaching was characterised by at least four essentials: The centrality of the cross and redemption through the death of Jesus Christ; addressing specific areas of need of his audience; the use of stories from daily life to illustrate his sermons; and total dependency on prayer and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The preaching of Nicholas Bhengu was founded on the centrality of the cross. Bhengu asserted that he preached the cross of Jesus Christ as a starting point for Africa. He mentioned that as Christian believers, they were persuaded, convinced and convicted that "this Jesus is God, nothing less, nothing more. He is God!" (Lephoko 2010:103).

Bhengu's preaching adopted the latent perfectionism of the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. In addition, Bhengu preached and demonstrated divine healing to prove that there is a God who is stronger than the Devil. He asserted that without faith healing, his church would be as empty as the other Protestant missions. However, he regarded hostility to medicine as a regrettable mistake on the part of many Pentecostal churches (Lephoko 2010:105-106).

Furthermore, through his preaching, Bhengu declared war on sin and crime such that many people were converted, and murderers confessed their crimes and gave themselves over to justice and law-enforcement agencies (Lephoko 2010:106).

Bhengu was not obsessed with ancestral worship, as he believed that by being converted through believing the gospel, Jesus Christ would deal with such a superstitious mentality (Lephoko 2010:107).

Bhengu understood the psychological and emotional make-up of his audience. He had an understanding of people and human nature. Bhengu's preaching was successful because he provoked curiosity so that people could come to his services. He also knew how to deal with people's needs for socialisation and asserting themselves. It was important to him that people had a sense of community within the congregation. (Lephoko 2010:108).

Last, Bhengu was a great storyteller. He used stories people could relate to in explaining spiritual issues. Lephoko relates that Bhengu once boasted to him that he

could preach a different sermon on each of the 365 days of the year without repetition and he had a different story to embellish every sermon he preached (Lephoko 2010:109).

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter is the homiletical section of this study, and it explored various aspects of preaching. At the beginning of this chapter, an attempt is made to define and describe the concept of preaching. Among the various definitions of preaching is that preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers (Peppler n.d.:2). In addition, a comparison is made between preaching and teaching.

The next section dealt with the phenomenon of preaching, which entails God's presence in preaching, the conviction of the audience in preaching, the relation between the preacher and the audience as well as imagination in preaching.

Different views of the preaching event (such as preaching as Christian praxis, preaching as poetry and preaching as art) were explored. In addition, two approaches to preaching (inductive and deductive), as well as different forms of preaching such as rhetorical preaching, narrative preaching and prophetic preaching, constituted the next section.

Under the section on important elements of preaching, this chapter dealt with the preacher and different metaphors of the preacher, the sermon, the Scripture and the congregation. Furthermore, the section on the history of preaching includes Roman Catholic preaching, Lutheran preaching and Pentecostal preaching. Preaching in the African context includes the challenges facing the African preacher's preparation of a sermon and some lessons to be learnt from the history of preaching in Africa. The last section of this chapter dealt with the preaching of Nicholas Bhengu, the founder of the AOG (BTG).

The next chapter deals with Christology as part of Pentecostal preaching.

## CHAPTER 4

### CHRISTOLOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The notion of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth has received widespread attention from different perspectives. In the words of Robert S. Berkerly: "No issues of Christian thought have gone through more thorough analyses in this century than those problems pertaining to the New Testament (NT) affirmations of the unique, unprecedented, once-for-all character of the person of Jesus." While in the past there was no consensus about the identity of Jesus, the theological climate has changed somewhat to insist that to understand the New Testament faith, it is necessary to support the Christological affirmations and significance of the person of Jesus (cf. Henry 1992:99).

Views about who Jesus was are manifold. These views are implied in questions such as: Was Jesus an inspired and inspiring prophet who confronts people with a lively sense of the supernatural? Was he a man through whom God superlatively manifested Godself, and performed works unmatched in human history? Or was Jesus merely a devout Jew engaged in a dispute with fellow Jews over the proper interpretation of Judaism? Was Jesus the *Wunderkind* of the apocryphal Gospels, a child genius who worked miracles even while at play? Was he an itinerant Galilean Semite sharing his people's apocalyptic hopes, or a religiously obsessed fanatic warning of the end of time? Was he a sage offering words of wisdom as did Confucius, Socrates, and others, or was he a guru who imparted universal truths about life and mortality? (Henry 1992:94).

What about his crucifixion, death and resurrection? Was he so venerated that his colleagues could not believe that he was dead? Is he a man whose crucifixion cut short his earthly life but who in the church's proclamation became God and assumed aspects of supernatural mythology, such as virgin birth, incarnation, atonement, resurrection and ascension? (Henry 1992:95).

Over time the notion of who Jesus is has posed other questions such as whether the term "Christ" is simply a semantic symbol for whatever satisfies the human craving for

a fuller life, and hence an expression serviceable to atheists and materialists as well as to biblical Christians. Does Jesus exhibit human nature at its best, and restorer of authentic humanity, as well as the consummator of mankind? Is he the ethical norm by whose example humans in all generations must measure virtue? (Henry 1992:95).

In Matthew 16:13 Jesus asked his disciples a question: “Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?” While some of the disciples offered different responses to the question, Simon Peter responded by saying “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt16:14-16). Throughout the centuries people have acknowledged Jesus as a significant historical figure, a moral example or a good teacher. However, Christianity has held onto Peter’s confession that Jesus of Nazareth, is the expected Messiah who fulfils the Old Testament (OT) hopes of Israel (Platinga, Thompson & Lundberg 2010: 227-228).

This chapter is a sequel to Chapter 3 (on preaching) to respond to the core research question of this study, which is: “How is Christology as a doctrinal element manifested and treated in contemporary preaching of Pentecostal churches in the Western Reef Region?” In linking preaching to Christology, Smith (2008:145) uses the relationship between the Bible text (words), the Incarnate Word (Christ) and God. He explains that in preaching, the preacher ought to be faithful to the biblical text (words). These words (text) will then reveal the Word which was with God in the beginning (John 1:1), that is, Christ. In turn, Christ as the express image of God the Father, reveals to the listeners who God is. This means that while the preacher must stick to the text because of its sufficiency to speak about God, the preacher’s exposition should be carried by the commitment to reveal Christ.

This chapter discusses Christology as the portrayal of the person and ministry of Jesus Christ by exploring among other aspects, views on the origins of Jesus as Messiah, Christological controversies and the development of modern Christologies by Church councils and Church Fathers. In addition, the chapter deals with Christology from the Patristic, Medieval and Reformation periods and beyond, as well as the fourfold Gospel and Classical Pentecostal Christology. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the meeting points between Pentecostal and ecumenical Christologies, which is then followed by a discussion on African Christology.



The last part of this chapter deals with the Christology of the NT and the concept of the Messiah in the Old Testament (OT). The rationale behind the discussion of these two sections is to enable an analysis of sermons observed in the AOG (BTG) churches of the Western Reef Region, which is the empirical section of this study. This is motivated by the understanding that the contents of the sermons will invariably be from various books of the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments.

There are different ways of understanding Christology. On the one hand, some understand it as the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ or the study of Jesus' self-understanding, and of the titles, concepts, and conceptual patterns in which the NT Church expressed its faith in him. On the other hand, others limit it to the church's theological reflection on the nature of Christ in the centuries following the period of the early church. Furthermore, some define it as a study of the person of Christ, and in particular of the union in him of the divine and human natures, and his significance for the Christian faith (Mueller 2010:277).

Christology as a branch of Christian theology concerns itself with the person, nature and work of Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christ (Hultgren 1988:3). It aims to understand how early Christians came to understand Jesus the man, as Christ the Messiah (Watson 2010:107). While there were other evaluations of Jesus such as Rabbi, Prophet, High Priest, Saviour, Lord and Son of Man, the term "Christ" from the Greek term *Christos* which is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Messiah* was used alone or in combination as "Jesus Christ" as a personal name of Jesus. In this sense, Christology then discusses how Jesus came to be called Messiah, and the implications of that designation. In other words, Christology entails the evaluations of Jesus regarding who he was and his role in the divine plan (Brown 1994:3).

According to Brown (1994:4), two kinds of Christology can be distinguished: "Low Christology" and "High Christology". While "Low Christology" is about the evaluations of Jesus that do not necessarily include divinity, such as Rabbi, Prophet, High Priest and Messiah, "High Christology" covers those evaluations of Jesus which include an aspect of divinity, such as Lord, Son of God, and God.

Furthermore, three components of the development of Christology can be noted: First, the expectation of the redeemer figure within Judaism. The Jewish expectations for

the coming priest, prophet and king as found in the OT and Jewish tradition are primary for Christology. This is because they were resources for Jesus' understanding of his identity and mission; as well as for the early Christians in seeking to understand Jesus' significance. Second, is the influence of Jesus' ministry, crucifixion, resurrection and post-resurrection appearances. These events were crucial to Christology in that they formed the basis of his followers' understanding of his nature, and subsequently the development of formal creeds. Third, is the translation of the terminology of Christology from Hebrew and Aramaic to Koine Greek. Although the terminology of Christology is derived from the OT and Jewish tradition, it, however, found expression in the Greek language, which was culturally embedded in, and influenced by the Hellenist world. Therefore, it can be argued that Christology can be understood as a process influenced by the political, cultural and religious environment of early Christianity, both Hellenist and Jewish (Watson 2010:107-108).

#### **4.2 VIEWS ON THE ORIGINS OF JESUS AS MESSIAH**

The origin of Jesus as the Messiah is a contested issue. First, some scholars hold a view that Messianism was a later development of the origins of Christology. This view argues that it is the resurrection that gave origin to the claims of Jesus' messianic status. The claim of his followers after the resurrection was that "God had made the prophet and teacher Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah." In other words, Jesus' life was not messianic. However, the argument against this view is that the resurrection could not turn Jesus into something that he was not before, because there was nothing about messiahship with it (Bird 2012: 22).

Second, Bird (2012:23-24) alludes to the argument that Jesus distanced himself from Messianism because it was an issue of Judean zealotry and that the concept of Messiah was not used about Jesus since there was more interest in the Son of Man Christology. Furthermore, this allusion mentions that Jesus' messianic status developed in several stages: First, in association with the parousia, and backwards to his exaltation; and then imported further backwards to the passion story (because of the title on the cross). From then through equating Jesus' eschatological deeds with messianic acts, and eventually, it was the creation of the name Jesus Christ. However, Bird's argument against this view is that if the first coming of Jesus was not messianic, then there is nothing that necessitates his second advent to be messianic. He argues

that an eschatological agent does not necessarily have to be messianic, because Jesus' identity as 'Son of Man' and 'Lord' was sufficient to designate his role at the parousia.

The other view argues that Jesus repudiated the title of Messiah, but his followers added the title to explain the saving significance of his death (Bird 2012:25). While there have been historians who attempted to rediscover the figure of Jesus, the problem with a gospel involving Jesus Christ is that this historical Jesus is not entirely known. Research about this historical Jesus started in the mid-1700s with Hermann Reimarus (cf. Buttrick 2015: viii). This is attested by Schweitzer (1911:23) that "Before Reimarus, no one had attempted to form a historical conception of the life of Jesus."

Then came David Friedrich Strauss in the mid-1800s, in whose study of Jesus, he dismissed miracles, resurrection accounts, and birth narratives as a myth difficult to believe (Schweitzer 1911:159; cf. Buttrick 2015: viii). Thereafter, came Albert Schweitzer, who argued that Jesus was not a universal teacher at all, but an apocalyptic figure who believed that God would soon end the present age and usher in a new world. As a result, Schweitzer raised the question: What do we now know about Jesus? In answering this question, it could be said that Jesus was a young Jew, who was first influenced by John the Baptist. After John's death, Jesus began his preaching and organising, wherein he assembled twelve disciples with whom he aimed to renew the faith of Israel and also announce the coming of the kingdom of God (Schweitzer 1911: 289-337; cf. Buttrick 2015: viii).

### **4.3 CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES**

There are various Christological controversies such as Gnosticism, which regards Jesus as an angelic being, bringing secret knowledge from God; and Docetism, which in general, held that Jesus only appeared to be human, but had no human body and did not die on the cross (Gathogo 2015:1). However, this section will deal mainly with three Christological controversies namely, Arianism, Apollinarianism and Nestorianism.

### 4.3.1 Arianism

In agreement with Modalism (modes in which the one person of God appears in the world) Arianism is a part of the development of the Trinitarian doctrine. It is based on the teaching that Jesus Christ was the preeminent creature begotten by God the Father to mediate between the infinite, eternal and unknowable God and the finite, temporal world (Platinga et al 2010:577). This heresy was started by Arius, presbyter of Alexandria. It denies the eternality of Jesus Christ the Son of God as the Logos. Arius pushed the Christological question back to the origin of the pre-incarnate Logos. Arguing about Jesus being the begotten of the Father, Arius maintained that if the Father begot the Son, then he that was begotten had a beginning of existence. Therefore, in that sense, there was a time when the Son did not exist. He argued that if God is indivisible and not subject to change, then, "begotten," implies that whatever is begotten of God must derive from a creative act, not from the being of God. Therefore, the Son is not coeternal with God since he has a beginning. This Arian controversy was condemned at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. as being patently heretical when judged by the apostolic witness. After the Nicene Council, Athanasius, a deacon of Alexandria carried the argument against Arius, in defence of biblical Christology and eventually triumphed over the Arians. The Nicene Creed insisted that Christ is of the substance of the Father and that saying the Son is begotten from the Father from eternity is not to divide the indivisible God but to accept the testimony of the apostles (Mikolaski 1974:67).

### 4.3.2 Apollinarianism

Apollinarianism is a view started by Apollinarius of Laodicea, who was one of the leaders among Eastern Trinitarian theologians in the 360s and 370s A.D. He was an associate of Athanasius and began to serve as pro-Nicene bishop of Laodicea around 360 A.D. (Beeley 2011:378). Apollinarianism is a Christological view rooted in the theology that in the incarnation, the pre-existent person of Christ, the divine Logos, took the place of the human rational soul of Jesus of Nazareth, thus rendering him less than fully human (Platinga et al 2010: 577).

Apollinarius' central theological belief is that Jesus Christ is fully and personally divine and that Jesus can save and is worthy of worship because he is the eternal Son of

God incarnate. This confession entails the dualism that Christ is fully divine and that, although being the Son of God, he is a different person from God the Father. In some sense, Apollinarius insists that one must neither confuse nor separate Christ's humanity and divinity nor imagine that they become altered in the incarnation. The fundamental conviction in Apollinarianism is that Christ is himself the eternal Son of God in the fullest sense and that he is the same both before and after the incarnation. Even though God and human flesh remain distinct, in Christ the creature came to be in unity with the uncreated (God). Therefore, even though Christ was not named 'Jesus' before his birth, his human body is inseparable from the [body of the] divine Son, because it is conjoined into unity with God (Beeley 2011:379-380).

From a soteriological point of view, Christ's fundamental identity must be that of God, who has become flesh for our salvation, and not God plus a distinct human being, or a human being who has been joined to God (Beeley 2011:382).

#### **4.3.3 Nestorianism**

Nestorianism is a Christological controversy which was named after Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople. This controversy arose as a result of the confusion about the meaning of terminology in the understanding of the union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. Nestorius was Antiochene in his theology and tended to separate the divine and human in Jesus, by emphasising the human side of Jesus (Vandersluys 2009:1).

The Nestorian controversy arose in the post-Nicene century and became one of the most unpleasant controversies in the Church during the time of the Church Fathers. The Nicene Creed embraced and encoded the belief that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. However, because the creedal statements were by nature brief, there was room for alternative interpretations of the divine and human natures of Christ. Consequently, the question of how to explain this unity of the two natures in Christ became the root cause of Nestorian controversy. The Nestorian point of view stressed Christ's human nature because of the belief that it was only in becoming fully human that Christ was able to save humanity. This is termed the "Word-man" stream of Christology, and it maintains that the Logos united himself with a complete human being, body and soul. However, critics of the Antiochene Christological position were

concerned that this view separated the divine and human in Jesus to such an extent that they ultimately believed in two separate persons in Christ (Vandersluys 2009:1-2; Platinga et al 2010: 592).

#### **4.4 DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTOLOGY FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT, PATRISTIC, MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION PERIODS AND BEYOND**

According to O'Collins (2013:412) to study Christology one has to find its background in the NT, the Patristic period, the Medieval period and through the Reformation and beyond. In this regard two aspects are important: First the union of divinity and humanity in Christ (Ontological Christology) and second, his saving significance for human life and destiny, as well as for the world (Functional Christology/Soteriology).

Furthermore, three pairs of terms are key in understanding Christology: High Christology and Low Christology; Christology from above and Christology from below; as well as Explicit Christology and Implicit Christology. On one hand, High and Low Christologies designate the positions that are held about Christ. While High Christology recognises the divinity of Christ, Low Christology does not, and sometimes even denies it. For Low Christology, Christ is like a dead hero. On the other hand, Christology from above and Christology from below focus on the starting point and direction in terms of systematic reflection. Christology from above starts with the pre-existent Logos or Son of God who descends from above into the world (John 1:1-4). Christology from below starts with the human history of Jesus as presented in the Synoptic Gospels. While these Christologies complement each other, they face opposite challenges. Furthermore, Explicit Christology follows a line where Jesus clearly states his divine status, while Implicit Christology typifies that his utterances and actions imply that he is on par with God, whom he calls "Abba" (O'Collins 2013:412-413). For instance, according to Sloan (1986:19), the text of James as we have it, is explicitly Christian regardless of whatever can be said about its composition, history, in terms of its use of Jewish sources and/or character as a piece of first-century wisdom literature. Even without the traditional Christological titles, there is enough evidence to know that it lies within the mainstream of early Christian confession theologically. In addition, it has enough of an implicit Christology to suggest that, under different literary circumstances, the author could have written much more about Christ than he did on this occasion.

#### 4.4.1 The New Testament interpretations of Christ

The Christology of the NT is devoted to discerning and describing how the different writers of the NT speak of the person and work of Jesus as the Christ. This study of NT Christology is both historical and theological. It is historical in the sense that it requires the interpreter to lay aside the Christological definitions, dogmas and formulas of centuries past, and begin to enter into the thinking of the NT writers, before the unfolding of the subsequent Christological thought. In addition, it is theological in the sense that the interpreter should think like the writers of the NT themselves, and describe what a given writer says within the context of other theological conceptions, as well as in comparison with other NT writers (Hultgren 1988:3).

As stated in Acts 2:32-36, the early Church believers were Jews who believed that Jesus was the awaited Messiah and risen, Lord. They appreciated Jesus as a result of their conviction that through his resurrection and exaltation, the new age of God's triumph had come. Furthermore, they believed that the promises of the Scriptures such as Psalm 110:1 "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" (NKJV), had been fulfilled. However, how Jesus died on the cross was not in line with the Jewish messianic expectations. Therefore, there was a need for an explanation, because according to Deuteronomy 12:23, anyone who hung on a tree had died under God's curse (Robinson 2004: 287).

The interpretation of Ontological and Functional Christologies has drawn on the NT and in particular the Gospels and the Pauline letters. To understand modern Christology, we need to understand how it uses biblical and historical sources. From a historical point of view, two questions are pertinent: The question of principle and the question of fact. On one hand, the question of principle asks: "To what extent does or can the conclusions of historians support faith in Christ?" On the other hand, the question of fact is: "Does belief in Christ as truly Son of God and Saviour of the world go back to Paul, the pre-Pauline Christian community or the earthly Jesus himself? The implication of this question is three-fold, namely, what we can say about Jesus' self-consciousness; whether we find in Jesus' life and ministry the starting point for faith in the tripersonal God or do we have to wait for the Trinitarian formulae in the Pauline letters? Last, is the question whether Jesus was personally raised from the dead by God (O'Collins 2013:413).



In addition, beyond the fact of Christ's existence and death on the cross, historical conclusions should neither affect nor support faith in him, because in this sense faith is isolated from history and only relies on the direct experience of Jesus in the here and now. However, this view has not been accepted by faith groups such as Catholics, Evangelicals and Orthodox scholars. They argue that knowledge of the historical Jesus gained from the Gospels belongs essentially to the faith in him and Systematic Theology, while it is acknowledged that knowledge of the historical Jesus cannot bring someone to faith in Christ (O'Collins 2013:413).

From the question of fact, many liberal theologians have argued that Jesus was merely an outstanding teacher of ethics, a final prophet or a wandering wonder-worker. This view holds that Paul and other writers credited him with divine identity and created in him the Christ of faith, thus misrepresenting the Jesus of history. That is, they perverted the faith of Jesus into a faith in Jesus as divine Lord and Son of God. Faith in Jesus as the Son of God first emerged among Greek Christians, and it transformed the human Jesus into the divine Son of God. Subsequently, the Johannine Gospel embodied this stance. However, contemporary biblical scholarship shows passages where Paul quoted earlier traditions which involved the worship of Jesus such as the hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 and 1 Corinthians 16:21. This belief in High Christology and its consequent practice did not emerge later through a gradual process but was there from the beginning (O'Collins 2013:413-414).

Regarding the present authorship of Christologies, implicit claims made by Jesus himself showed a consciousness of being on par with God. Jesus showed this in his claims to have authority to change divine law, to forgive sins and to be decisive in the final salvation of human beings, as well as to preside in the final judgement of humanity (O'Collins 2013:414).

#### **4.4.2 Development of Modern Christologies in the Patristic period**

Modern Christologies developed from centuries of debates which addressed Christological controversies such as Arianism and Apollinarianism, as described above. These debates happened in seven councils, namely, The First Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., the First Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.), the Council of Ephesus, the Council of Chalcedon in 431 A.D., the Second Council of Constantinople (553

A.D.), the Third Council of Constantinople in 680-681 A.D. and the Second Council of Nicea in 787 A.D.

The Council of Nicea, held in A.D. 325, taught that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God being one with God. It sought to reconstruct the controversial views of Athanasius and Arius. These two theologians of Alexandria differed concerning the nature of the Word. Athanasius held that the Word (God's speech) which took flesh in Jesus, was eternal and uncreated, and was with God in the beginning. Arius denied the equality of the Word (*Logos*) with the Father, thus being accused of bringing the Son of God under the level of creatures. The Council of Nicea reconstructed this view by producing a creed which defined the Divine Word as deriving from the very nature of God, and not a creature (Gathogo 2015:2).

The First Council of Constantinople was convened in 381 A.D. under the influence of Emperor Theodosius 1. This council confirmed the results of the Nicene Council, revised the Nicene creed and ended the controversy regarding the Trinity. It also condemned Apollinarianism and affirmed the deity of the Holy Spirit. Although the Council affirmed the deity of the Holy Spirit, it said little about the role and function of the Holy Spirit (Onica 1996:45).

The Council of Ephesus dealt with the case of Nestorius who taught that Jesus was two persons – one human, the other divine. The human person was born of Mary and the divine person was the eternal Word of God. The council of Ephesus rejected this teaching and affirmed that Jesus was one person, born of Mary, in whom God's eternal Word dwelt in intimate union (Gathogo 2015:2).

The Council of Chalcedon was an ecumenical assembly that determined how the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ were to be understood in the teaching of the Church. In this Council, it was agreed that the person of Jesus Christ was to be understood as complete in deity and complete in humanity. These two natures were related without separation or division and yet also without confusion or change. Furthermore, beyond the understanding above, conceptual priority was to be assigned to the divine over human nature. These natures constituted the identity of Jesus Christ only as they occurred in differentiated unity. Three features of the Chalcedonian pattern of conceiving the nature of Jesus can be said to be: the indissoluble

differentiation, the inseparable unity and the indestructible order (Hunsinger 1995:62-65).

The Barthian understanding of the person of Jesus regarding his two natures was to be understood in terms of asymmetry rather than hierarchy. This is so because the two natures were not to be conceived to be ordered according to a scale, whereby they would differ only in degree. Rather, their asymmetry arises from them sharing no common measure or standard of measurement (Hunsinger 1995:63)

The Council of Chalcedon rejected the teaching of Eutyches who claimed that Christ was a single person, but that he had no human nature, only a divine nature. The Council in rejecting this view, re-affirmed the teaching of Nicea and Ephesus regarding the true humanity of Jesus, in whom God's eternal Word took flesh (Gathogo 2015:2).

While the Second Council of Constantinople (553 A.D.) unpacked the Council of Chalcedon by saying Christ is one person of the Holy Trinity, the Third Council of Constantinople in 680-681 A.D. taught that Christ's perfect human nature involves him having a human will which is in harmony with his divine will. The Second Council of Nicea held in 787 A.D. defended the veneration of sacred images or icons representing Christ (O'Collins 2013:414-415).

#### **4.4.3 Response of contemporary Christians to the teachings of the Councils**

Contemporary Christians differ about how they accept the teachings of the above-mentioned Councils as authoritative. While the Roman Catholics, the Anglicans and the Orthodox theologians accept all the seven Councils as authoritative, the Assyrian Church of the East recognises only the first two; and the Oriental Orthodox churches accept only the first three as binding. Many Evangelical and Protestant theologians do not view the teachings of these Councils as binding, but they nevertheless acknowledge the importance of the Councils' teachings about Christ. All mainstream Christian churches officially accept the fourth-century Nicene (Nicene-Constantinople) creedal faith in Christ as "True God from true God." (O'Collins 2013:415).

Contemporary exponents of Christology criticise the early Christological thinking and teaching on the basis that they indulge too much in abstract language, disregarding the first-order concrete language of the Bible. The Church Fathers in their creedal

statements defended the faith language of the NT and refused to replace it. In the end, the finest product of these Councils was developed by the Nicene-Constantinople Council which used biblical language (O'Collins 2013:415).

#### **4.4.4 Medieval, Reformation and Modern Christologies**

The Medieval and Reformation periods are crucial for understanding and interpreting modern Christology. For instance, some contemporary theologians subscribe to the theory of St Anselm of Canterbury, which states that Jesus made 'satisfaction' for human sin. Martin Luther maintains that the passion and the cross of Jesus provide the foundation of Christian theology, and in particular Christology. John Calvin developed the triple office of Jesus, namely, prophet, priest and king. There was also a view that limited Christian life to the practice of morality which stated that Jesus is not a redeemer but only a model of good behaviour. Consequently, Jesus' preaching of the kingdom is interpreted only as a call to join the ethical community. However, Johannes Weis (1971:67-92) and Albert Schweitzer ([1911] 2014:313-552) challenged this teaching by putting forth the future-oriented nature of Jesus' preaching. Hence many scholars hold the notion that Jesus preached a kingdom that was already inaugurated but not yet consummated (cf. O'Collins 2013:416).

From the sixteenth century, there were different systems of philosophical thoughts which influenced modern Christology. These philosophical thoughts from which practitioners of Christology had to choose, included analytic philosophy, existentialism, idealism, feminist philosophies and pragmatism. This led to the Hegelian thought of denying the divinity of Christ and the denial of God. In the twentieth century, Hegelian thought manifested itself in the work of, for example, Wolfhart Pannenberg (1968:115-211) (cf. O'Collins 2013:417).

#### **4.4.5 Contemporary Christologies**

Contemporary Christologies can be divided into three, namely, historical, anthropological and cosmological groups. The group taking Christology in the historical direction consists of those who have engaged with the testimony of the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, as well as those who embrace the teachings of the Councils and the Church Fathers. This group also includes those who view Christ as a Revealer and Saviour in world religions. However, this historical approach faces a

challenge of how an individual called Jesus, whose birthplace is known, and who died two thousand years ago, can have universal relevance for the whole human race and their destiny (O'Collins 2013:417-418).

The group which adopts the anthropological approach to Christology includes Karl Rahner, who developed a Christology of human transcendence. This Christology held that it is not only the divine self-communication in the person of the Son but also the "limit case" in what is possible for humanity in its dynamic openness to the Absolute (Rahner 1978:176-228; cf. O'Collins 2013:418).

The cosmological approach to Christology, which is inspired partly by the prologue of the Johannine Gospel, maintains that God's Logos which is omnipresent appeared fully in Christ. This view is shared by scholars such as Karl Rahner (Rahner 1978:212-228; cf. O'Collins 2013:418).

One other way of classifying Christologies is by observing how truth, justice and beauty shaped various approaches to reflecting on who Jesus is to himself and humanity. While there is an overlap in the views of theologians regarding truth, justice and beauty, characteristics of their interests show through their Christological works, and can be classified as oriented towards truth, the good (justice) or beauty. Adherents of the first approach which is predominant in North American and European universities and seminaries, pursue the meaning of the truth of belief in Christ. The second style of Christology is shaped by a search for justice. This is a practical approach to doing Christology, as it struggles against injustice happening everywhere. This approach is embraced by African, Asian, Feminist and Liberation theologies, and it draws its inspiration from Jesus' solidarity with the marginalised people of society. The third approach encourages doing Christology from the beauty and context of worship. This approach emanated from early Church Councils and leading Greek Church Fathers. It bears witness to the beauty of Christ as revealed and presented in liturgical celebration (O'Collins 2013:419).

While O' Collins distinguishes three groups of contemporary Christologies, historical, anthropological and cosmological, Gathogo (2015:2), distinguishes six Christological trends of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first Christological trend commits itself to interpreting

and adapting Christology to modern mentality and situations. In this trend five Christological perspectives can be distinguished:

- The cosmological perspective, which bases itself on an evolutionary worldview. From this perspective, Christ is seen as evolution fully accomplished (Gathogo 2015:2).
- The anthropological, existential and personalistic perspective, which confronts modern atheistic tendencies and secularist humanism. This perspective expresses Christology in terms of personalistic philosophies which focus on human existence. One of its key proponents Rudolf Bultmann, ignored the historical Jesus but affirmed that Jesus existed and was crucified and that our knowledge of him is what the early Church believed him to be (Bultmann 1961:116-122; cf. Gathogo 2015:2).
- The historical perspective puts more emphasis on the historicity of Jesus as well as his redemptive work. One of the proponents of the historical perspective is Edward Schillebeeckx ([1979] 2014:27-633, 647), who starts with Jesus of Nazareth and proceeds historically and critically to deduce that the historical Jesus is the narration of God and the paradigm of humanity. That is, Jesus lived out in advance, before us, what we have to realise in circumstances which are different from those he knew (cf. Gathogo 2015:2).
- The secular perspective entails a Christology from below and seeks to demythologise all that is supernatural and/or divine. From this perspective, Christ is a man (not God who came down) through whom God spoke, acted and encountered humanity (Gathogo 2015:2).
- The political perspective propagates Christology in the realm of concrete practical problems in socio-economic and political spheres (Gathogo 2015:2).

The second Christological trend is geared exclusively to the historical Jesus. This trend minimises the importance of classical Christology. In this trend, Christ's divinity is usually rejected. The third trend conceives Christology as the upholding of Trinitarian theology. It is a reaction against modern secular Christologies and emphasises Christology from above. The fourth Christological trend is based on the

proclaimed Christ and the historical Jesus. That is, the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history are the same person. This trend postulates that we truly follow the way of Christ by living in the kingdom of God and identifying with the hungry, the sick, the social rejects and all sorts of outcasts, as Christ did (Gathogo 2015:3).

The fifth Christological trend entails the Asian Christologies of inculturation and liberation. Raimundo Panikkar uses Hindu cultural and religious heritage to articulate this Christology. Panikkar integrates the Hindu worldview under the premise that the Indian cultural religiosity already contains Christian elements through which one can truly find Christ. From this view, Christianity and Hinduism have a lot to learn from each other (Panikkar 1964:1-54; cf. Gathogo 2015:3).

The sixth Christological trend entails African Christologies. African Christologies of the twentieth century comprised mainly two groups namely, Christologies of liberation and Christologies of inculturation. On one hand, African Christologies of liberation have an affinity with those of Latin America and present Jesus not just as a liberator from oppressive dehumanising systems, but also from sin. These Christologies are more inclined to cultural and religious values than to secular and Marxist ideologies. On the other hand, African Christologies of inculturation can be categorised into ancestral and non-ancestral Christologies. From an ancestral Christological perspective, Christ is a unique ancestor because he is the source of life and ranks highest amongst other African ancestors. In addition, Christ is the ancestor par excellence because he is our mediator and has preceded us in passing over. Proponents of the non-ancestral strand of African Christology of inculturation present Jesus as Mediator, Liberator, Healer, Saviour, Power, and Redeemer. This strand also uses the African understanding of initiation rituals and biblical teachings to identify Jesus with the Head and Master of initiation (Gathogo 2015:3-4).

However, the argument against the two-fold categorisation of African Christologies is that such a categorisation is too sharp because the African theologians concentrating on inculturation are also concerned with liberation. Conversely, those concentrating on liberation are also concerned with inculturation (Gathogo 2015:3-4).



## 4.5 PENTECOSTAL CHRISTOLOGY

This section is key to this study since this study entails preaching and Christology in the churches of the AOG (BTG), which is a Classical Pentecostal denomination.

### 4.5.1 Features of Classical Pentecostal Christology

Two important features of Classical Pentecostal Christology are worth mentioning, namely, the fourfold Gospel, and Jesus and his experience of the Holy Spirit.

#### The Fourfold Gospel

Pentecostalism represents the confluence of four major themes of nineteenth-century American Wesleyan revivalism, namely, the experience of salvation (the new birth), the experience of entire sanctification (Wesleyan “Christian perfection”) and/or the baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing and Premillennial eschatology. These are essential elements to all forms of Pentecostalism and are collectively referred to as the “full Gospel,” “fourfold Gospel,” or “foursquare Gospel.” (House 2013:13-14)

While these features were initially developed relatively independently of one another during the nineteenth century, it was A. B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, who first brought them together and coined the term “fourfold Gospel” in 1890. Early Pentecostals adopted Simpson’s term but modified it by distinguishing sanctification from Spirit baptism and assigning tongues as the definitive evidence of Spirit baptism. This differentiation leads to the fourfold Gospel sometimes being called the fivefold Gospel. While many who joined the movement later dropped sanctification as a discrete experience, in general, the fourfold Gospel may be considered the basic confession of faith of Classical Pentecostalism. This fourfold Gospel can be summarised as follows: Jesus saves us according to John 3:16. He baptises us with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4. He heals our bodies according to James 5:14-15, and Jesus Christ is coming again to receive us unto Himself according to 1Thessalonians 4:16-17 (McPherson & Cox 1969:9; cf. House 2006:28).

While there is a perception by some that Pentecostalism is preoccupied with pneumatology, it is also thoroughly Christocentric in theology and practice. This emanates from the notion that features of the fourfold Gospel are mediated through Jesus Christ and are based on his work. A feature common to all branches of

Pentecostalism is that Jesus Christ is given a very high place, hence Pentecostalism has successfully integrated its major beliefs into the theological locus of Christology. (House 2006:28-29).

### **Jesus and his Experience of the Holy Spirit**

Pentecostals also place great emphasis on the importance of the life of Jesus, including his experience of the Holy Spirit and supernatural power, as a model for Christian living. Notwithstanding that Pentecostal Christology is normally “from above,” they have at the same time, emphasised Christ as the prototypical Spirit-filled human (Williams 1988:339; House 2006:29).

While the divinity of Jesus is recognised, his anointing and empowering by the Spirit for ministry from the time of his baptism forward (Luke 3:22, 4:1,14,18), was not exclusively a function of his status as the divine Son of God. The ministry of Jesus, in terms of his preaching, healings, deliverance, and many miraculous deeds flowed out of his anointing by the Holy Spirit, and not necessarily because he was the Son of God. It was his Spirit-anointed humanity and the power resting on that humanity that lay behind his ministry in word and deed (Williams 1988:339; cf. House 2006:30). In this sense, then, Pentecostals and Charismatics see Jesus as a model to be imitated. Hence, one of the favourite texts for Pentecostals is John 14:12, in which Jesus says that those who believe in him will do the same and even greater works than he did. This is interpreted to include the miracles, healings, and other supernatural gifts found in the ministry of Christ. However, Pentecostals constantly remind us that these experiences do not come from one’s power, virtue, or authority, but are done in the name of Jesus, by his authority, and are a continuation of his work (John 14:13–14) (Brunner 1952:324–325; cf. House 2006:30).

#### **4.5.2 Pentecostal Christology and ecumenical theologies**

There are many differences between Pentecostalism and ecumenism. While many Pentecostal theologians agree with fundamentalists and evangelicals on some issues, Pentecostals make less contact with ecumenical theologians, who are known to take a critical view of Scripture. Pentecostals have many formidable points of difference from mainline theology. These differences include baptism, liturgy, tradition and authority in the church, as well as theological education for ministers. One of the

reasons why Classical Pentecostalism has not made contact with ecumenism is that Classical Pentecostalism regarded its purpose as restoration of NT Christianity, and therefore saw no need for collaboration with older denominations. On the other hand, the mainline churches viewed the Pentecostals as uneducated enthusiasts (House 2013:23).

Notwithstanding that the two movements developed separately, they pursued many of the same points of theological interest. First of these points is that Pentecostals and more liberal protestants have both stressed the priority of the experience of God over doctrinal orthodoxy. Second, both movements showed a willingness to adapt doctrine and practice to specific contexts. Third, both Pentecostals and ecumenists saw religion as more than merely spiritual. For instance, one of the important trends of ecumenical theology of the twentieth century was the discovery and acceptance of the biblical theme of liberation. That is, salvation is not just spiritual but is also a physical and social matter. Fourth, the greatest context for meetings between ecumenists and Pentecostals has been the Charismatic movement. The Charismatic movement started and flourished primarily among mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics, not evangelicals, who are otherwise assumed to be doctrinally closer to Pentecostals. (House 2013: 23 -25).

According to House (2013:31-45), there are three potential meeting points between Pentecostal Christology and ecumenical theology, namely, Functional Christology, the methodological question of approaching Christology “from above” versus “from below”, and the place of the Holy Spirit in Christology (or Spirit Christology).

#### **4.5.2.1 Functional Christology**

The proponents of Functional Christology sought to understand Christ primarily through his work, with ontological questions deemed less important or irrelevant. This was in keeping with the overall perspective of the Bible. For instance, the NT hardly speaks of the person of Christ without at the same time speaking of his work. In the NT, when the question “Who is Christ?” is asked, the question never exclusively, or even primarily means, “What is his nature?” Rather, it, first of all, says “What is his function?” However, one weakness of a purely functional approach to Christology is that soteriology can supplant Christology, such that the person of Christ is lost in the

pursuit of his benefits. (Erickson 1991:215–221; cf. House 2006:32). The view of the majority today is that Jesus' value and function demand examination and recognition of his status at the level of his being. His saving work indicates both who he was and is. There can be no satisfactory account of what Jesus does if we dismiss as unimportant the question of who he is. Every soteriological statement has its Christological implications. However, much can be gained from a functional approach to Christology, by loosening the link between the ontological and soteriological questions. The traditional understanding of the person and work of Christ is that God became human so that the perfect God-man could offer a perfect sacrifice that would satisfy God's justice and atone for humanity's sins. From this view then, Jesus had to be fully God because only God can save the world and be fully human. After all, only a human can justly be punished for humanity's sins. While this approach has its challenges, it has served the Christian faith well (Williams 1988:325–341, cf. House 2006:33).

#### **4.5.2.2 Christology “from above” versus Christology “from below”**

The second meeting point between Pentecostal and ecumenical Christologies is the methodological question of approaching Christology “from above” versus “from below.” While these concepts are most commonly applied to the ontological questions, they also have a bearing on Functional Christology. Christology from above presupposes the divinity of Christ and assumes knowledge of the purposes of God in him. Christology from below arose out of the advent of biblical criticism and the quest for the historical Jesus. This approach begins with a historical investigation of the life and person of the man Jesus and historical faith-responses to him. However, most contemporary theologians prefer Christology from below, as both the best approach to the biblical texts and the best means of relating Christology to human experience and need. Notwithstanding, some contemporary theologians prefer the “from above” approach, because of the difficulty of bridging the gap between historical knowledge and present-day experience. The exalted Christ is no longer physically present with his people, and his ongoing activities are not open to historical or scientific investigation (House 2006:36).

Pentecostal Christology is traditionally from above. The deity of Christ is accepted a priori and never questioned. There is a sense, however, in which Pentecostal

Christology should be considered from below, particularly in light of what the fourfold Gospel contains and what it lacks. As a creedal summation of Pentecostal beliefs, the fourfold Gospel is thoroughly Christocentric, focusing on Jesus as the exalted, divine Son of God. It is, however, a very selective affirmation in that it only contains the functions and titles of Christ that relate specifically to the soteriological experiences of believers. The titles of Jesus as Saviour, healer, and so forth, refer not only generally to his messianic work but also specifically to how Jesus saves and heals an individual personally. The Christ of the Bible had to be experienced before he could be understood (House 2006:37).

#### **4.5.2.3 Spirit Christology**

The third meeting point between Pentecostal and ecumenical Christologies is the place of the Holy Spirit in Christology or Spirit Christology. In recent works, theologians have made attempts at developing and resolving the issue of the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit (Macchia 1999:15–16). In Spirit Christology, the constitutive role in the theological and soteriological reality that we identify with who Jesus Christ is and the salvation that he brings is viewed to proceed from a basic and foundational pneumatological orientation (Del Colle 1993:95–96). Normally, Spirit Christology refers to a type of ontological Christology and is compared and contrasted with Logos Christology (Habets 2003:200-234; cf. House 2006:39). While some observers commonly assume that Pentecostalism is primarily occupied with the third person of the Trinity and gives great attention to the experience of the Spirit, the movement is inherently Christocentric. This Christocentrism is also evident in less formal expressions such as music, preaching, and even church decoration, such as the words “Jesus is Lord” which are seen in front of many Pentecostal sanctuaries. Jesus is seen as the subject and performer of all soteriological functions while the Holy Spirit is mentioned as the medium of Jesus’ ministry of baptism. Christ, therefore, becomes the mediator of the Spirit (House 2006:39-40).

The concept of Spirit Christology also has utility within the framework of a functional, soteriologically oriented Christology. There are two phases to the relationship of Christ and the Spirit. The first phase of the relationship was during the life and ministry of Christ. Christ was the human being perfectly endowed with and empowered by the Spirit. After Christ’s resurrection and exaltation, his relationship with the Spirit

changed. In this phase, he is not the one through whom the Spirit works but the one who now bestows the Spirit. That is, the one through whom the Spirit worked is now the one who sends the Spirit to work through, in, and for other human beings. From the perspective of the Pentecostal fourfold Gospel, Christ is the subject and actor at the centre of all religious affirmation and expression; he is the mediator of the Spirit's presence and work (Dunn 1989:141–149, cf. House 2006:41).

Much attention has been given to the relationship between the Father and the Son in both Ontological and Functional Christology but less to that of the Son and the Spirit. A Functional Spirit Christology should redress this neglect of the Spirit's work. Jesus saves, but the Spirit regenerates (Titus 3:5). Jesus heals, but the Spirit gives gifts of healing (1 Corinthians 12:9). Jesus baptises and fills believers with the Spirit so that the Spirit may enable them to continue the work of Jesus (Acts 1:8). Christians long for the Lord's return, and the Spirit longs with them (Romans 8:23) (House 2006:43).

From an Indian Pentecostal perspective, several Christological themes are active in their everyday spirituality. Although there are no rigid boundaries between these themes, they, however, differ in their emphasis on various aspects of Christology. The themes are Jesus as Healer, Jesus the Exorcist, Jesus the Provider, Jesus the Protector, Jesus the Saviour, Jesus the Lord, and Jesus the Supreme God. Jesus the Healer is the primary level of Christological articulation and forms the very basis of the Christology of ordinary Pentecostals. This is a result of lack of financial resources, widespread poverty, inadequate transportation facilities, and scarcity of health care facilities in remote villages. This lack of resources has adversely affected the chances of healing of ordinary diseases. As such, many people have experienced Christ and accepted him through the healing they had experienced (Abraham 2011:195; Tsiane 2013:34). The theme of Jesus as an exorcist is also a primary level of Christological articulation for Indian Pentecostals. This emanates from people being delivered from demonic possessions and the attack of malevolent spirits (Abraham 2011:206).

Jesus the Provider forms the second level of Christological affirmation after the level of Jesus as the healer and exorcist. In this case, people see Jesus as a solution to the other realms of their struggle, namely economic, social and household spheres (Abraham 2011:215-216). Jesus the Protector is another prominent theme. This perception is linked to the notions of Jesus as the healer and exorcist in that Jesus

has not only healed them but also continues to keep them from any possible sickness. Similarly, Jesus has not only liberated them from demonic forces but keeps protecting them from all possible fears, attacks from evil spirits and persecutors (Abraham 2011:226). Jesus the Saviour is another significant Christological theme in which believers identify Jesus as the only one who saves them from their sins. This saving act of Jesus, however, is not limited to the spiritual realm only; rather, it encompasses even the physical, material and social aspects of their lives (Abraham 2011:236; Tsiane 2013:33).

Jesus the Lord forms another level of Christological articulation for Indian Pentecostals, and it attributes divinity to Jesus. This idea is evident in almost every worship service, personal testimony, and common greetings between believers. For instance, *Prabhu ka Mahima ho* (Glory to the Lord), and *Jai Yishu* (Victory to Jesus) is used to attribute glory and victory to the Lord who delivered them from their wretched conditions (Abraham 2011:244).

Jesus the Supreme God is a theme that is deeply ingrained in the psyche and lifestyles of ordinary Pentecostal believers. It shows in their daily lives as they affirm that Jesus is a unique and incomparable God. They elevate Jesus above all other gods and consider every other deity they know inferior to Jesus. For them, Jesus is God Most-High (Abraham 2011:250).

In conclusion, according to House (2006: 44-45), a truly Pentecostal Christology, from the history of Pentecostalism, is a Functional Spirit Christology. This emanates from the fourfold or fivefold Gospel of Jesus as Saviour, Healer, Sanctifier, Baptiser with the Holy Spirit, and soon-coming King. Even though Pentecostalism tends towards Christocentrism, its interpretation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is strongly human-oriented. In this sense then, the “from below” approach becomes appropriate for Pentecostal Christology. In addition, a genuinely Pentecostal Christology has a strong pneumatic inclination that acknowledges the perichoresis of the Trinity. When all these points are included in Pentecostal Christology, the full Gospel is preached.

In the words of Kärkkäinen (2013:207-208): “At the heart of Pentecostal spirituality, is not a pneumato-centrism, but rather a Christocentrism. To be more precise, it is a thoroughly pneumatological Charismatic Christocentrism in which Jesus is perceived



in five interrelated roles: Saviour, Sanctifier, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, Healer and Soon-coming Eschatological King”.

In the NT and the earliest Christian theology, the most common way of referring to that activity of God in Jesus Christ had to do with the Spirit. However, this tradition later changed to incarnational Christology. When referring to Jesus, the oldest Christological formula spoke of Jesus in terms of the dynamic of “after the flesh” (which refers to Jesus’ weakness as shown in his humiliation) and “after the Spirit” (which refers to the divine transcendence, power and eternity). These earliest Christologies can be referred to as Spirit Christologies. These Christologies sought to explain the unique presence of the Spirit in Jesus Christ. They can therefore be referred to as Pneumatological Christologies or Christological Pneumatology (Kärkkäinen 2013: 196-197).

While the Logos and Spirit Christologies in the NT had to do with two successive stages in Christ’s life, from the Patristic period onwards they refer to the divinity and humanity of Jesus as two simultaneous principles of being (Kärkkäinen 2013:197). Early theological debates hardly saw Logos and Spirit Christologies as alternatives, but rather as complementary. That is, the Spirit Christology is seen as a complementary way of explaining the coming together of the divine and the human in a person. Similarly, Spirit Christology was not meant to be a denial of incarnation, but rather its affirmation. The Scripture sees the whole life of Jesus including birth (Luke 1:35), baptism (Mark 1:10), anointing (Luke 4:18-21), ministry (Matthew 12:28), testing (Luke 4:1), self-offering at the cross (Hebrews 9:14) and the resurrection (Romans 1:4, 8:11), as a function of the Spirit. Consequently, the title Jesus Christ in the NT links Jesus to the OT idea of Messiah, or Spirit bearer or Man of the Spirit (Kärkkäinen 2013:198-199). Therefore, the coming of the Spirit upon the Son was the beginning of the eschatological promise of the pouring out of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32). That is, the one baptised in the Spirit became the baptiser in the Spirit (Matthew 3:11) (Kärkkäinen 2013:200).

In recent times, with the coming of the pneumatological renaissance, there has emerged a diversity of Spirit Christologies in contemporary theology. While there are views that Logos and Spirit Christologies should be complementary, other views seek to replace Logos Christology with Spirit Christology. However, it is argued that a model

that incorporates both is better than the explanatory power of only one, and it also does justice to the tradition. Hence it is argued that Logos Christology should not eclipse the mission of the Spirit, hence subordinating it to the Son. In addition, if that be the case, the self-emptying of the Son is stripped of its radicalness, and even putting Jesus' humanity in jeopardy (Kärkkäinen 2013: 200-205).

Linking Logos and Spirit Christologies helps theology to stick with the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the other reason why there is a need for complementarity between Spirit and Logos Christologies is that this can bridge the disjuncture between the person and the work of Christ. Otherwise, Logos Christology becomes "identity without relevance" and Spirit Christology becomes "relevance without identity." In this sense, just as Jesus is the goal and culmination of the presence and operation of the Spirit, he is on the other hand, the starting point of the mission and sending of the Spirit (Kärkkäinen 2013:207).

#### **4.6 AFRICAN CHRISTOLOGY**

According to Stinton (2000:287-288), African Christians have always understood and responded to Jesus in the light of the biblical teaching they received, as well as their cultural heritage. However, in the last few decades, Sub-Saharan theologians have identified what they call a "Christological crisis." This "Christological crisis" emanated from a lack of critical and systematic reflection on Jesus Christ by African Christians, regarding their own cultural inheritance and identity. This critical and systematic reflection on Jesus Christ would help in articulating the African Christology which meets the needs of the African Christians. One of the central questions to be asked about the "paths of Christology" across Africa is: "What is the specific significance of Christ, as seen by Africans, particularly African Christians?"

Related to what the paragraph above states, is the assertion by Magezi & Igba (2018:4) that the question of the relationship between Christ and African Christians, inquired: "If Christ was to appear as the answer to the questions that Africans are asking, what would he look like?" Ever since, this question has been relevant in African theology and Christology. The relevance of this question arises out of the perception that Christ is foreign to African Christianity. This stems from how Western missionaries introduced Christianity to the African people. Furthermore, this question is relevant

because of the person and place of Christ in African religiosity. Africans are familiar with God, but not with the notion of Christ. Instead, they venerate their ancestors. Christ was introduced as a saviour interested in the worldview and problems arising from the Western world. Given that Africans are familiar with blood-related ancestors who meet their contextual existential needs, the Christ who was preached in the Church was not relevant to their situation. As a result, the predominant African Christological approach is that of Christ as an ancestor. This approach has received popularity in academic literature because it addresses the African traditional worldview of ancestral veneration. However, it has been challenged because it reveals a tendency to diminish the reality of Christ as God incarnate. Furthermore, it is perceived to encourage syncretism in African Christianity.

Ancestry is an important theological theme in African theologies. Ancestral veneration is a central and basic traditional and contemporary form of cult. Ancestors represent a sense of community and corporate personality, and their spirits are believed to use their power for the well-being of the community. While ancestors are lower than God, they are higher than humans. In the African ancestral view, the Trinity entails God, Christ and the community of saints. According to this view, God is the Ancestor because he begot the Son and is the prototype of the Son. Jesus Christ is an ancestor because of his role as a mediator between God and humans (Kärkkäinen 2014: 358-367).

According to Banda (2005:11) and Nyamiti (1984:16), the “Jesus as Ancestor” paradigm, rests on Jesus’ “common divine sonship with us.” That is, since Christ is the Son of God (who is the King), and Christians’ faith in him makes them God's children, then Christians share a common kinship with Christ. The elements that qualify Christ as being ancestor include his being our creator, head of the mystical body, and our elder brother in Adam. This implies that our origin traces back to Christ our creator. For traditional Africans, ancestors function as both the founders of clans and families and as a linkage between God and the living. From this perspective, anyone who would propose an ecclesiology or Christology from a perspective of African ancestral veneration would have to pay attention to the living dead (spirits of the dead). These spirits of the dead are commemorated by their descendants as

indispensable and beneficial, or even salvific in their earthly existence (Stinton 2006:112).

However, there are challenges regarding the view of Jesus as an ancestor. First, the concept of ancestral spirits is one of the items in African Traditional Religion (ATR) which is incompatible with the Christian faith. Hence these spirits cannot be compared to Jesus Christ. Second, theological views about Jesus as an ancestor are compounded by the question of whether ancestral spirits are worshipped, or only venerated. Third, the concept of ancestors as mediators between God and man is in contradiction with the Christian faith which holds that Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man, as mentioned in 1Timothy 2:5 (Stinton 2006:115).

Writing from a South African experience, Anderson (2000:32), mentions that the attitudes and beliefs of what he terms “Spirit-type” churches regarding ancestors, cannot be generalised, because for many of these churches, especially in Southern Africa, contact with ancestors is rejected. What is regarded as ancestors by some churches is viewed not as ancestors at all but as demons which are to be confronted and cast out?

Over and above the African view of Christ as an ancestor, Africans view Christ also as a chief. People in Africa have great honour for their traditional leaders, be they kings or chiefs. These are not simply political leaders, but they are also religious heads, seen as divine symbols of their people's health and welfare. Their office is regarded as the link between human rule and spiritual government. Christ is regarded as chief, first because Christian revelation exalts him (Philippians 2). In addition, the prerogatives of an African chief are seen to have been fully realised in him. His attributes of power, wisdom, generosity and reconciliatory ability, qualify him for that title. Christ is called chief because he defends and protects his people and has triumphed over Satan. This emanates from the fact that the African figure of a chief is closely associated with that of the victors. Furthermore, Christ is regarded as chief because he is the head of a community, namely, the Church. The African view of a chief is that of a guardian of the community, symbolising their unity and identity, as well as representing their political and religious aspirations (Nwuzo 1997:46).

#### 4.6.1 Soteriological perspectives of African Christology

From the African soteriological perspective, man is not just a soul, he is also a body, and therefore longs not just for holiness but also wholeness. This wholeness must include freedom from all forms of misery and oppression. This is the context in which African Christologies depict Christ, as a Liberator, a Saviour and a Healer (Nwuzo 1997:39-40).

From an African Christological perspective of Christ as a Liberator, Christ is expected to free people from Africa's many crises such as warfare, famines, epidemics, locust invasions and many changes in the weather. During his earthly ministry, Christ did not only preach the kingdom of God and forgive sins, but he also went around curing the sick, feeding the hungry, consoling the suffering and showing justice and mercy. This showed that he was not neutral to the condition of the needy. Christ's ministry to man showed that disease as well as physical and mental handicaps, are contrary to life, and that liberation from the same, is part of his messianic mission (Nwuzo 1997:39-40).

Africans do not only believe in Christ as a Liberator, but they also believe in him as a Saviour. However, salvation in traditional African religion implies wholeness of life, including social equilibrium (harmony with the living and the dead), as well as personal equilibrium (inner harmony) that produces physical well-being. For the Gospel to be meaningful to the African people, salvation has to embrace their total world, both physical and spiritual. Furthermore, the concept of salvation for Africans does not only mean eternal destiny, but it also entails the concept of equity and justice, the gift of children, as well as deliverance from misfortunes, poverty, and interpersonal conflict (Nwuzo 1997:41-42).

Many African writers such as Appiah-Kubi (1987:75-78) and Bujo (1992:85) have attributed the title of Healer to Christ. This is understandable because healing power is an important quality in African traditional belief since healers are very helpful to communities. According to Mbiti (1969:162), every African village has a medicine man who is accessible to everybody at almost all times. However, while magic is attributed to the healing power of the African healer, the Christian faith excludes the idea of

magic from Christ's power or activity. This is because Christ's healings are seen as signs of his salvific mission (cf. Nwuzo 1997:43-44).

#### **4.6.2 Sources of African Christology**

John Mbiti (1972:51-52), one of the pioneers of contemporary African theology alludes to what he calls sources of Christological discourse. First is the Bible, which he refers to as the final authority on all religious (Christian) matters. The import of the Bible in Christological discourse is captured in the statement: "No theology can retain its Christian identity apart from the Scripture" (cf. Stinton 2000:290). As the ultimate authority and standard for Christian life, the Bible is said to be a record of God's self-revelation. It is God-breathed, and its purpose is for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God should be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17) (Kunhiyop 2012:24). The second source is the theology of older churches. That is, the tradition and scholarship of the Church in Europe. Third, is the traditional African world in which the African people live and try to assimilate the Christian teaching. Fourth, is the living experience of the Church as an expression of African Christianity (cf. Stinton 2000:290).

#### **4.7 CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The NT consists of the Gospels, the Book of Acts, the Pauline Letters, the General Letters and the Book of Revelation. The Christology of the Gospels has common characteristics which we can summarise as follows: First is Narrative Christology. In this Christology, the Gospels tell the story of who Jesus is. The question of Jesus' identity is raised by what he does, says and suffers, thus revealing who he is. It is discussed among the characters in the story, namely, Jesus himself, his disciples, the people and his enemies. There are also moments when God declares who Jesus is. The Gospels tell a story that maintains the identity of the earthly Jesus, in the life he lived with the living. The Gospels also show the exalted Jesus, who reigns with God and is known to his followers now. The story of his human life and death tells not only what he has done, but also tells that even at this time he is still the same Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified and shares the identity of the one God. Narrative Christology also serves to explain the Christological titles such as Messiah and Son of God (Bauckham 2004:125).

Second is Metanarrational Christology. Besides telling the story of Jesus, the Gospels also connect that story with the metanarrative of the Bible, which is the grand story of God, his people and his world. This story begins with creation until its conclusion with the eschatological future wherein all things will be created anew. The full significance of Jesus can be seen only in that universal context. This is evidenced in that each of the Gospels, in its distinctive way, begins by linking its story back to the Old Testament's story. One way in which all the Gospels connect Jesus' story with Israel's hopes of salvation is by prefacing their account of Jesus' ministry with an account of the preaching of John the Baptist, one of the greatest of Israel's prophets. Moreover, the Gospels also point ahead, each in different ways, to the 'soon-coming' future. This future comprises the mission of the new, messianic people of God to the world and the completion of God's purposes through Jesus at his future coming (Bauckham 2004:126).

The third is Scriptural Christology. Scriptural Christology asserts a prominent theme in all the Gospels, that Jesus and the events of his life, ministry, suffering, death, resurrection and exaltation fulfilled the promises of God in the OT. This theme appears in the many explicit quotations from the Scriptures, as well as in many allusions, such as those to the Psalms featuring the passion narratives in all the Gospels. While some of these quotations and allusions refer to messianic prophecies which were recognised at the time, others refer to passages that were not commonly read as messianic (such as Isaiah 52-53). In addition, the Gospels identify in the OT many typologies, patterns and trends that point to or culminate in Jesus. Furthermore, the titles that the Gospels use about Jesus' identity (such as "Messiah/Christ", "King," "Son of David," "Son of God," "Lord" and "Son of Man") are mostly derived from the Hebrew Scriptures. Some of these were in use as messianic titles among Jews at the time, and others were not. The scriptural Christology of the Gospels originates in the distinctive ways in which Jesus himself discerned his identity and mission in the Scriptures and in the creative exegesis of Scripture used by early Christians as a means of interpreting Jesus and his story. That is, this exegesis entails a two-way interpretative process of understanding Jesus in the light of the Scriptures and understanding the Scriptures in the light of Jesus' way of identifying himself (Bauckham 2004:126).



Fourth we have Salvation-Historical Christology. Christology in the Gospels, in particular, and in the NT in general, is intimately connected with soteriology. The story of Jesus is told as the climactic story of how God acted for the salvation and renewal of both his people Israel and the whole creation. Therefore, Jesus appears as the one who has a unique mission from God to be the Saviour of the world. That is, in the language of the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus came to inaugurate the kingdom of God, or as the Apostle John puts it, to bring eternal life. This means that God was expected to come, not only to redeem his people and the nations but also to be present with them. This is shown in Matthew 1:23 and John 1:14-18 as Emmanuel, God among his people (Bauckham 2004:126).

Fifth, we have Relational Christology. The Gospel narratives are not about Jesus in isolation from others. Rather, they show Jesus in relationship and interaction with many other characters in the stories. This is exemplified in his relations with God as his Father, the Holy Spirit, angels, Satan and a wide variety of human characters. The identity of Jesus is constituted and clarified in the way in which his relationship with these other characters is established. For example, all the Gospels portray him as “the Son” in relation to “the Father.” He was sent by the Father and did the Father’s will, such as receiving and bestowing the Spirit and being a teacher of his disciples (Bauckham 2004:126).

#### **4.7.1 Christological titles and metaphors of the New Testament**

##### **Jesus as the Son of God**

Jesus as the Son of God is one of the most common Christological titles in the NT, next to “Christ” and “Lord.” It occurs in different forms such as “my Son,” “the Son,” “the Son of God,” “his Son,” and so on. The variants of this title appear seventy-four times in the Gospels, seventeen times in the Pauline epistles, twelve times in Hebrews, and twenty-four times in the epistles of John. This designation occurs in every NT author except in James and Jude. There are five key moments during Jesus’s earthly life recorded in the Synoptic Gospels where the declaration of Jesus’ status as God’s Son is made. Only Matthew has the “Son of God” title in all five moments. These key moments are first, Jesus’s baptism (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). Second, in Peter’s confession (Matthew 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). The third moment is Jesus’ transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35) and the

fourth moment is found when Jesus was before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:62-66; Mark 14:61-64; Luke 22:67-71). The fifth and last moment is the utterance of the centurion at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47) (Irons 2015:4-5).

The use of the title “the Son of God” was not only limited to what others said of Jesus. He also understood himself as such. This is seen in three passages in the Synoptic Gospels, the first of which is where Jesus is reported as praying to the Father: “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22). The second is Jesus’ implicit self-reference in the parable of the wicked tenants: “He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally, he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son’” (Mark 12:6; Matthew 21:37; Luke 20:13). The third is the statement in the eschatological discourse of Jesus, “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36) (Irons 2015:5-6).

The Sonship of Christ did not begin at some point in his earthly existence, but it went back to his pre-incarnate state. This pre-existence is shown in the prologue of the Johannine Gospel, which states that in the beginning, the Word (the *Logos*) existed as a divine being distinct from God the Father (John 1:1–3). “He was in the beginning with God” (verse 2). Furthermore, there are several passages where Jesus speaks of the time before he came into the world, his earthly ministry, and the time when he will be going back to the Father. For example, in John 16:28 he says, “I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father” (Irons 2015:10-11).

### **Jesus as the Messiah**

In the Book of Acts, Luke records several sermons by the apostles in which they use OT citations to support their claim that Jesus is the promised Messiah. For instance, Peter’s sermons in Acts 2, 3 and 4, show valuable insights into the apostles’ methods of interpreting the OT and to show how the Christology of early Christianity was rooted in the Scriptures. Since the majority of the audience in the sermons of Peter (Acts 2, 3, 4, 7 and 13) were Jews or Gentile proselytes, Peter took advantage of this. He used

these OT quotations which they knew, to show that the time of fulfilment of the messianic prophecies had come and that Jesus was the promised Messiah (Hahne 2012:1).

In Acts 2:34 Peter preaches about the resurrection of Jesus portraying him as David's Lord seated at God's right hand. Through this, he was confirming that Jesus was not only resurrected but had also ascended to sit on the right hand of the Father. Subsequently, having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured forth that which they both saw and heard (verse 33). The pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost confirmed that Jesus ascended to the right hand of God and received his kingdom. Peter then concluded that Jesus' enthronement to God's right hand, at the position of authority over all creation, provides certain proof that Jesus is "both Lord and Christ" (verse 36) (Hahne 2012:4).

### **Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of God"**

The phrase "the Christ, the Son of God" occurs six times in the Gospels (Matthew 16:16; 26:63; Mark 1:1; 14:61; John 11:27; 20:31). While the two titles, "the Christ" and "the Son of God," can be interpreted as being synonyms, another way of interpreting them is to take the second title, 'the Son of God,' to indicate that Jesus is not the Messiah-Son-of-David, nor the Messiah as the son of any other human being, but rather the Messiah-Son-of-God (Irons 2015:6). Furthermore, the difference between the two titles is seen in that while the claim to being Messiah was not regarded by the Jews as blasphemy worthy of death, the "Son of God" title was. For instance, according to Irons (2015:9), Simon bar Kosiba was a false messianic claimant, but he was never charged with blasphemy, instead, one rabbi accepted his claims and the other rabbis simply mocked him without calling for his death. However, the Jews wanted to kill Jesus because he referred to himself as the Son of God or equal with God, as seen in the following texts:

- John 5:18: "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."
- John 8:58–59: "Before Abraham was, I am." So, they picked up stones to throw at him.

- John 10:30–36: “I and the Father are one.” The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.

Jesus understood himself also as the Revealer or Image of the Father. When Philip asked him, “Lord, show us the Father,” Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9–10). Consequently, this self-consciousness of Jesus as God’s Son who knows and reveals the Father led to some NT authors speaking of Jesus in ways that exalted him. For instance, Paul hailed Jesus as “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15; 2 Cor 4:4). The author of Hebrews confessed that Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature (Hebrews 1:3) (Irons 2015:10).

### **Jesus as the Perfect Servant of God (Acts 3:13, 26)**

In another of Peter’s sermons in the Book of Acts, Peter refers to Jesus as the “Servant” of God who has been glorified (Acts 3:31). The use of the phrase “His Servant” alludes to the OT prophecy of Isaiah 52:13, which states “Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.” In addition, the last verse of Peter’s sermon refers to the Servant who has been raised from the dead when he said: “God raised his Servant” (Acts 3:26). Thus, we see the theme of Jesus as the Servant of God being presupposed in the whole sermon. This glorification of the Servant of God refers to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus to God’s presence where he shares in his glory (Hahne 2012:6-7).

### **Jesus as a Prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22-23)**

In Acts 3: 22-23, Peter quotes the Scripture and says: “Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him, you shall give heed to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’” Peter was quoting from Deuteronomy 18:15-16a and 18:19 where Moses made a direct prediction that God would raise a prophet like him. Peter sees this as a messianic prediction about Jesus and compares Jesus to Moses, not as a lawgiver, but in two major aspects: First, this prophet (Jesus), speaks authoritatively for God, just as Moses spoke with authority on God’s behalf. Second, Jesus redeems the people of God. As Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, so Jesus redeems his people, manifesting it through physical healing, wiping

away their sins and eventually restoring all things when he comes again. Through this comparison, Peter implicitly tells his Jewish audience that to be faithful to Moses, they must repent and believe in Jesus, since Moses himself pointed to Jesus, the Messiah. He also implies to them that the consequences of rejecting God's Messiah are as severe as violating the Law of Moses by failing to participate in the Day of Atonement, the result of which is being cut off from God's people (Lev. 23:29) (Hahne 2012:8-9).

### **Jesus as the Seed of Abraham (Acts 3:25)**

In this part of the sermon, Peter says besides being the beneficiaries of the prophetic promises, the Jewish people are also part of the covenant made with Abraham. Peter quotes the promise in the covenant made with Abraham in Gen 22:18 and 26:4. This promise affirmed the original promise in Gen 12:3: "In your seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Peter says: "God raised his Servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:25). Peter argued that this blessing would come to them on condition of their understanding of the promise made to Abraham. He also tells them this blessing of the Abrahamic covenant is not automatically given to Abraham's physical descendants. Rather, it comes when they repent and believe that these blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are brought by God's Servant, the Messiah (Hahne 2012:9-10).

### **Jesus as the Rejected Stone, which became the Chief Cornerstone (Acts 4:11)**

When Peter presented the Gospel to the Sanhedrin, he quoted Psalms 118:22, saying: "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone." This OT quotation was a metaphor that alluded to the suffering of Christ, his rejection by Israel, his exaltation by God, and his indispensable role in salvation. Since the rejection of the Messiah was foretold in Scripture, the rejection of Jesus by Israel's leaders showed that he is the Messiah appointed by God. Subsequently, God vindicated Jesus by raising Him from the dead. Since Jesus is the rejected stone that became the most important stone in the building, the logical conclusion is that "there is no other name under heaven . . . by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12) (Hahne 2012:11).

## **Jesus as God, Jesus as distinct from God, and Jesus and God.**

Jesus as God, Jesus as distinct from God and Jesus and God can be said to be the three major features of the Christology of 2 Peter. While several recent discussions of the theology of 2 Peter focus on its ethics and eschatology, there are some points noteworthy about its Christology. In the first verse of this letter, the author refers to Jesus as God. This is the only reference to Jesus as God in 2 Peter. Seeing Jesus as God makes the author believe that Jesus has divine power. The view that Jesus is God is also articulated in the use of the title “Lord” for both Jesus and God. Although the use of the title “Lord” does not necessarily imply divinity, the author of this letter uses it to suggest that they are “Lord” in the same sense as the word. This letter uses the title “Lord” 14 times of which seven times it explicitly refers to Jesus. (See 2 Peter 1:2,8,11,14,16; 2:20; 3:18 (Callan 2001:253-254).

2 Peter makes a distinction between Jesus and God, even if in various parts of this letter the author consistently refers to Jesus as Lord. This is evident in 2 Peter 1:2 where the author wishes his readers peace through the knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus Christ (Callan 2001:256).

Although 2 Peter sees Jesus as God being distinct from God, the author does not refer to Jesus as the word of God (as in the Gospel of John). Rather, the author uses the phrase “Son of God” to refer to Jesus (as shown in the account of Jesus’ transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-18). In the Hebrew Scriptures the phrase “Son of God” does not refer to a special ontological relationship with God, but “Son of” is an idiom in Semitic languages that indicates a relationship in addition to that of biological descent. In this sense then, “Son of God” refers to a relationship with God shared by many other people such as Israel as a whole, the king of Israel, as well as the Messiah (Callan 2001:258).

## **Christ the Teacher and Prophet**

These titles are evident in the implicit Christology of the Book of James. It is noticeable that the teachings of Jesus, such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), had a very great impact upon James. In addition, it can be said that for James, the central function of teaching was undoubtedly enhanced by the teaching role-modelled in the life of his Lord (as shown in James 3:1). This fact is reflected in the extensive use of

Jesus' sayings found in this book. However, it was not only the content of Jesus' teaching that seems to have touched the author of James but there was also the authority and the prophetic manner in which Jesus conveyed the teachings themselves. The author of James did not view this teaching as a mere academic enterprise, but as a task of morally compelling urgency, with eschatological significance (James 3:1). Literary analysis suggests the teachings of Jesus as a primary source for the exhortations of James. An inquiry as to the source of James' prophetic passion and tone, takes us back to the similar and very reasonable explanation of the historical Jesus as the originator. The blunt, and often harsh remarks Jesus directed to either his religious enemies (Matthew 12:34; 15:7, 14; 16:4; 21:31; 22:18; 23:1-36; Luke 16:15; 20:41) or, in some cases, even delivered to his disciples, for example, Matthew 8:26; 15:16; 16:8-11, 23; 17:17,20; and Luke 9:31 are likely reflected, in the often-searing tone evidenced by the author of James. For instance, Jesus could call his disciples "friends" (Luke 12:4) or "little flock" (Luke 12:32) on the one hand, and "unbelieving and perverted" (Luke 9:41) on the other hand. He could even sternly rebuke his disciples for their moral and/or intellectual stubbornness (Luke 9:41-45). In the same way, James also makes references to his readers as both "beloved brethren" (James 1:16, 19; 2:5; 1:2, 9; 2:1) and "double-minded" (James 4:8), "adulteresses" (James 4:4) who are proud (James 4:6), quarrelsome (James 4:1) and "judges with evil motives" (James 2:4) (Sloan 1986:14-16).

### **The Lord who heals and forgives**

For the author of James, the healing ministry of Jesus seems to have continued into the life of the early church, if it is assumed that anointing the sick with oil "in the name of Lord" (James 5:14) is a reference to the name of the Lord Jesus. If that is so, it would then be a work of the risen Lord in healing that is referred to in "the Lord will raise him" (James 5:15). If these two references to "the Lord" (James 5:14, 15) are indeed references to Christ, then the promise of forgiveness for the physically sick, who has also committed sins (James 5:15) would seem to represent the work of the risen Lord. The Lord who heals also forgives. This reminds us of the story of the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12), wherein a similar connection between forgiveness and healing is evidenced. It seems clear that for the author of James the historical Jesus continues to work in the community of faith (Sloan 1986:16).



## **The Friend of Sinners**

The injunction in James not to make "distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil motives" by showing favouritism to the wealthy and despising the poor seems to assume the historically based Gospel traditions regarding the fellowship of Christ with sinners. The fact that God has chosen the "poor of this world to be rich in faith" introduces an injunction against elitism and suggests that it is the ministry of Jesus and his identity with the poor and outcast that is being referred to by the reference in James 2:5, (that is, God's "choosing of the poor of this world"). In other words, God's "choosing of the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom" is a theocentric description for the author of James regarding the ministry of Jesus (Sloan 1986:16-17).

## **Jesus as Christ and Lord**

The explicit Christology of James is exemplified in the author's use of Christ and Lord, the Glory and the Name as well as Judge and Lawgiver. The two references to the "Lord Jesus Christ" make use of the most characteristic and frequently occurring titles for Jesus in early Christianity. The title "Christ" has Jewish roots as a reference to "Messiah." Though seldom used publicly by Jesus during the days of his ministry, the title "Christ" and/or "Messiah" was one of the most popular early Christian confessions about Jesus. This title found its functional roots in the ministry of Jesus, and its supreme vindication in the fact of his resurrection from the dead (Sloan 1986:19-20).

The title Christ had a connection with the title "Lord" (Acts 2:33-36; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 1:2f.; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:6-11; 3:8; Colossians 2:6; 3:24; and 2 Thessalonians 2:1) to form one of the earliest Christological confessions about Jesus. While the term "Lord" has been suggested by some to have arisen in the Hellenistic communities of early Christianity, its Jewish roots cannot be dismissed lightly. The presence of the term in several NT materials suggests that it was part of the very earliest confessions of Christianity. The term is a reference to the kingly status of the resurrected Jesus. This emanates from the early Christian belief that Jesus had acceded to a celestial throne and was seated at the right hand of the Highest God, which is the reason why Christians ascribe Lordship to him (Sloan 1986:20).

## **Christ as a God-sent leader**

The Book of Hebrews shows Christ as a God-sent leader of God's people, who is greater than either Moses or Aaron (Hebrews 3:1-6). In addition, comparing Christ to Joshua, the book shows that Christ leads his people to a better rest than Canaan, which was the rest that Joshua led Israel to. In this book, Christ is the great High Priest of his people (Hebrews 4:14-5:10). The priesthood of Christ is likened to that of the order of Melchizedek, which was timeless and universal (that is, not limited to time or nationality) (Hebrews 7:1-28). While the priestly work and sacrifices under the old covenant were limited in that they could not take away the worshipper's sins, Christ's priestly work under the new covenant removes sins forever (Hebrews 9:11-14) (Fleming 2004:182).

## **Jesus as the Glory of God**

The term "glory" is used as a euphemism for Yahweh. For instance, in Exodus 40:34 it is a word that refers to the light that could be seen when God was present in the tabernacle in the wilderness, in the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 8:11), or Ezekiel's vision of the heavenly throne (Ezekiel 1:28). The term "glory" itself came to mean the presence of God and thus was widely used in NT traditions as a reference to the presence of God in Christ. In addition, the reference to Jesus as "the glory" would seem to be a reference to his exalted status at the right hand of God (Sloan 1986:20-21).

## **Jesus as Judge and Lawgiver**

The titles "Judge" and "Lawgiver" in a way, represent the most significant, explicit Christological titles in the Book of James, in terms of relatedness to the distinctive message of this book. The major themes of this epistle are tied up with a series of related exhortations that enjoin a certain legitimating response to the divine oracles. For example, those who would be "wise" (James 1:5; 3:13) must be "doers of the word," who look "intently at the perfect law ... of liberty" (James 1:22-25) and thus demonstrate the saving faith that "works" and is thereby completed or "perfected" (James 2:14-26) (Sloan 1986:22-23).

## **Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as a merciful and faithful High Priest**

The letter to the Hebrews puts forth a sustained argument that presents Jesus Christ as the “Son of God” and as a “merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God” as shown in Hebrews 2:17. The author of Hebrews believed Jesus was the Son of God and turned to Psalms 2 and 110 as he developed his Christology. In Psalm 2:7, Jesus as the Son is portrayed as an agent of God. “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, You are My Son, Today have I begotten You. Ask of Me and I give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession” (NKJV). As the Son and king, he has a special and unique relationship with God. As the king, he is given authority as a divine gift from God. As the king, he is God’s agent, who is to ensure that God’s laws are followed by the people (Fishbeck 2012:32-33).

### **Jesus’ death as an atoning sacrifice for sins**

The Christology of Hebrews was the early Church’s belief that Christ’s death was pre-ordained by God as a sacrificial offering that had the power to overcome sin and death. This belief in the efficacy of the sacrificial system in the atoning of sins was essential for the high-priestly Christology found in Hebrews. Since the temple and its rituals were regarded highly as divine institutions, even after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. and the subsequent loss of the sacrificial cult, the rabbis continued to accept the priesthood in principle (Fishbeck 2012:34).

For the author of Hebrews, Jesus’ sacrificial death was an essential prerequisite for his entry into heaven. The author assumes that sacrifice is the only way to enter into the presence of God since it removes the barrier of sin. Christ’s death is understood as a sacrifice, as stated in the early Christian confession “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.” In addition, the humanity of Jesus was an important part of the author’s theology. “Therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 1:17-18). Jesus needed to be a human with flesh and blood to be able to offer a blood sacrifice to God. This would exalt him into the presence of God (Fishbeck 2012:36-39).

## Jesus as an Ideal Figure

The ideal High Priest was chosen by God to establish an eternal priesthood, and he would destroy the powers of evil and liberate the people. As a saviour or redeemer figure, the ideal High Priest functions as a heavenly priest and judge in a heavenly temple. In addition, the ideal priest is a saviour figure who shows a combination of priestly and royal characteristics. This ideal priest is also a teacher figure who will give authentic teaching in the last days. Furthermore, the important roles of the ideal priest are overcoming evil and giving eternal peace (Fishbeck 2012:44-45).

### 4.7.2 Designations and symbols used for Jesus in Revelation

The Book of Revelation is a revelation that comes from Jesus (Revelation 1:1). In this book Jesus reveals prophecies about future events. However, in doing so, he directly or indirectly reveals God the Father's nature, character and functions. This is exemplified in his introduction of himself to the seven churches in Asia Minor (Mueller 2010:276).

According to Mueller (2010:277-278), the Book of Revelation shows several ways of Jesus' character and functions: There are several designations and symbols used in this book to describe him as a divine being. In its various parts and visions, Revelation contains a rich and distinctive Christology, wherein Jesus is introduced with approximately thirty different names, titles, and images. Herein the readers of this book are informed about his character, nature and work. The following table shows the various imageries and designations used to describe the multifaceted nature and ministry of Jesus in the different texts of the Book of Revelation: (Note: Not all texts have been quoted)

<b>Designation/ Imagery</b>	<b>Texts</b>
Jesus Christ	Revelation 1:1, 2, 5
Christ	Revelation 11:15; 12:10; 20:4, 6
The firstborn of the dead	Revelation 1:5

The faithful and true witness	Revelation 3:14
The ruler of the kings on earth	Revelation 1:5
The Amen	Revelation 3:14
The Son of God	Revelation 2:18
The Lion	Revelation 5:5
The Lord of lords and King of kings	Revelation 17:14; 19:16
The Lamb	Revelation 5:6, 8, 12-13; 6:1, 16; 7:9-11, 14, 17
The Root of David (from Judah)	Revelation 5:5; 22:6
The Word of God	Revelation 19:13
The Bright Morning Star	Revelation 22:16
The Alpha and Omega	Revelation 22:13
The Bridegroom	Revelation 19:7

**Table 4.1 Imageries and designations used to describe Jesus**

These imageries and designations used for Jesus in the above table describe Jesus as both human and divine, but the author does not discuss how this is possible. While the book uses imagery and designation for God, and Satan (as dragon, serpent and devil (Revelation 12:9)), the number of designations applied to Jesus surpasses those of other beings. This may be attributed to the fact that Jesus has to be described as both, a human and a divine being, and that he is an active character in the book, whose part demands more than one or two designations (Mueller 2010:279).

Of all the designations as used in the Book of Revelation, four categories can be identified: First, most of them are unique to the Book of Revelation, and not directly applied to him in other biblical books. These include “witness,” “ruler,” “the first and the last,” “the lion from the tribe of Judah,” “the Lamb,” “the rider on the white horse,” “the

angel,” and “the male child,” “the Lord of lords and King of kings,” “the Alpha and Omega,” “the beginning and the end,” and “the Bright morning star” (Mueller 2010:279). Second, the standard designations of Jesus that occur also in other parts of the NT include the names and titles “Jesus,” “Christ,” “Jesus Christ,” “Son of Man,” “Son of God,” “Lord,” and “Lord Jesus.” (Mueller 2010:284). Third, designations used in the Book of Revelation which are seldom used in the NT include “firstborn of the dead” and “holy and true.” The notion of “firstborn” occurs six times in connection to Jesus in the NT: That is, as Mary’s firstborn son (Luke 2:7), the firstborn among many brothers (Rom 8:29), the firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15), the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18; Revelation 1:5), and the firstborn who is worshipped by the angels (Hebrews 1:6). Furthermore, the notion of truth when referring to Jesus is seen in John 14:6 where Jesus refers to himself as the way, the truth and the life (Mueller 2010:287-289). Fourth, there are designations about which opinions of scholars differ, which are assumed to also describe Jesus. These designations include the “rider on the white horse” in Revelation 6, the “angel” of Revelation 8:3-5, “the angel” of Revelation 10, “Michael,” as well as “the kings from the East” (Mueller 2010:279). While there are other interpretations regarding “the kings from the east”, Mueller (2010:283) argues that “The kings from the east” should not be identified with the kings of the earth but with Jesus and those who belong to him.”

### **4.7.3 The Lamb Christology in Revelation 5**

According to Singleton (1998:1), there is a reciprocal relationship between Christology and the Book of Revelation. While Christology is crucial to understanding this book, the Book of Revelation also tells much about Christology. However, Singleton singles out chapter five of the book as the primary text and focal point of the Christology of Revelation. In this chapter, Jesus appears as the Lion-Lamb who is victorious and accepts worship. In addition, this chapter makes five important statements about Jesus, that is, he is unique (Revelation 5:1-4); he is victorious (Revelation 5:5); he is majestic (Revelation 5:6); he reveals the future (Revelation 5:7) and he is acclaimed (Revelation 5:6) (Singleton 1998:6).

Furthermore, the vision of the Lamb in chapter five of this book reveals the humanity, deity, atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This vision affirms the humanity of Jesus in at least three ways, one of which is that Jesus appears as the “Lion of the

tribe of Judah” and “the root of David.” These designations connect the Messiah to Jewish ancestry. The attribute of the deity of Jesus is shown in chapter five when he is being worshipped. Regarding the atonement that Jesus did on the cross, chapter five does not show the Lamb as that which was seen by John the Baptist, because the Lamb of the Apocalypse is victorious over Satan. Not only was the Lamb victorious over Satan but he made his followers be priests and kings unto God. Last, the vision of the Lamb shows Jesus’ resurrection in that the Lamb shows the marks of slaughter, which is a parallelism of Jesus’ resurrection body (Singleton 1998:8-14).

#### **4.8 THE CONCEPT OF THE MESSIAH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (OT)**

Martin Luther was a proponent of the Christocentricity of the Scripture, as exemplified in his assertion that "All of Scripture is pure Christ." However, this principle presents some challenges, especially in the exegesis of the Old Testament (OT). While some view the Christological content of the OT as those isolated messianic prophecies or broader typological patterns of the coming Messiah, others assert the presence of the Son in some OT events. For example, some state that the use of the plural in the creation narrative "Let us make man in our own image" in Genesis 1:26 indicates the presence of the Son in creation; and that the appearances of the “Angel of the Lord” are appearances of the pre-incarnate Christ. However, some condemn, while others caution against Christocentric exegesis of the OT as unwarranted or undue "Christianising" of the OT. This argument maintains that Christianising the Old Testament is a spiritual eisegesis that reads Christ into the OT uncritically, being influenced by the study of Jesus in the New Testament (Gieschen 2004:106-107).

Christological readings of the OT present several problems. On one hand, based on historical biblical criticism, it is argued that Christians read too much into the OT. This forces critics to question whether the Christian use of the Hebrew Scripture is the preparation for the Gospel, or whether it foretells the New Testament (NT) Gospel or embodies it. On the other hand, the problem of rejecting the Christians’ use of the OT Scripture Christologically, would also present some challenges, one of which would be to reject the many centuries of Christian tradition, which has always read the OT Scriptures Christologically. In addition, it might seem as if the organic connection between the two Testaments is rejected and hence undermining the Jewish roots of the NT (Ludlow 2008:104).



Gieschen (2004:105-106) compares and contrasts different views about the approach to the OT concept of the Messiah. He mentions that for some, like Lutheran pastors, the hermeneutical principle of Christocentricity of the OT is central to preaching. However, others such as practitioners of traditional historical criticism condemn this principle, while conservative evangelical exegetes, caution against preaching Christ from the OT as undue Christianising of the OT. Some arguments which dismiss both the Christocentric and theocentric readings of the OT, advocate an anthropocentric alternative. That is, the OT is mainly about the human condition, about richly textured mythic stories of naming "god," and of naming one another. It is about coping with good and evil, struggling to live together and embracing one another.

However, Henry (1992:104) argues in support of Christological readings of the OT, that the Christian faith began with the acceptance of Jesus' claim to be the fulfilment of God's messianic promises given through the OT prophets. That is, if there had not been a previous history of Israel, there would have been no NT. This is true, even though some modern interpreters have read back into the OT, Christological intentions and meanings that seem foreign to it. This does not minimise the extensive basis that the NT writers found in the OT for accrediting Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christ.

The argument in favour of the Christocentricity of the OT is deemed valid for the following reasons: First, the Christocentricity of the OT can and should be expressed when interpreting prophecy concerning the coming Christ, both with regard to specific rectilinear prophecy (That is, where a straight line can be drawn from prophecy to fulfilment without any branches), as well as broader typological prophecy. This emanates from the knowledge that due to the consistency of God we can say that the OT is in some sense prophetic, revealing the reality of God in Jesus Christ. Second, Christological content should also be expressed when interpreting divine words and deeds of grace and judgment in the OT. The rationale hereof is that there is an organic relationship between God's grace and judgment throughout history and the Christ event. Although the Christ event is later, it is the source of divine grace and judgment as has been the case throughout history. Third, the Christocentricity of the OT should also be expressed when emphasising the real presence of the Son in the BC events of the Scriptures. It is argued that the real presence of the pre-existent Christ in OT

history is the most important clue towards understanding the NT exegesis of the OT (Gieschen 2004:108).

#### **4.8.1 Christocentricity as an exegetical approach to the Old Testament**

The section below shows that Christocentricity as an exegetical approach to the OT is not new. This can be shown in the works of the following exegetes of the early church:

##### **New Testament Writers**

According to Jude 5, the Lord (Jesus) led Israel out of Egypt and punished their disobedience. In addition, the Apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth that Christ was with Israel in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10: 1-10). In addition, according to the Gospel of John, Isaiah saw the Son in his call vision (John 12:41), and Jesus himself acknowledges that as the Son he interacted with Abraham (John 8:56-59) (Gieschen 2004:112).

##### **Justin Martyr**

Writing in the middle of the second century, he uses the Christological approach to OT theophanies extensively. Justin's understanding of Christ in the OT is based on the understanding that the Son was present in the lives of God's people throughout the events of the OT, and not only on the prophetic promises or types regarding the coming Christ or an allegorical interpretation. Justin and other ante-Nicene fathers identified the appearance of God as seen or heard in the OT, as the Son (Gieschen 2004:111).

#### **4.8.2 Preaching Christ from the Old Testament by New Testament writers**

According to Greidanus (1999:203), six major ways of preaching Christ from the OT can be identified as redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfilment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes and contrast.

##### **Redemptive-Historical Progression**

Redemptive-historical progression is not only a presupposition for interpreting the NT, but it is also a way of preaching Christ from the OT. It links Christ to the OT redemptive events which find their climax in him. For instance, the Gospel according to Matthew begins with the genealogy of Christ, going back in redemptive history to King David

and the patriarch Abraham (Matthew 1:1-16). Similarly, Luke 3:23-38 includes Jesus' genealogy back to Adam, who is mentioned as "the son of God" (Greidanus 1999:203-204).

Furthermore, in the Book of Acts, Luke recounts several sermons in which Jesus was preached, making use of the redemptive-historical progression. For example, on the day of Pentecost Peter preached that Jesus' death and resurrection were in God's plan when he said: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves also know, Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that He should be held by it." (Acts 2:22-24, NKJV) (Greidanus 1999:204).

### **Promise-Fulfilment**

Promise-fulfillment is embedded in redemptive history since God makes a promise in one era of history and fulfils it in the subsequent eras. In the NT this is evident in the Matthean Gospel, as exemplified in that about ten times Matthew writes "All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet ..." (Matthew 2:15; 13:35). Although some of these quotations are neither promises nor predictions, they show how Matthew looked back in the OT from the reality of Christ. Since Matthew was writing primarily to the Jews, he focused on the fulfilment of the OT promises (Greidanus 1999:206-210). The hermeneutical key of promise and fulfilment centres on Jesus Christ because the OT looks forward to him and the NT gives witness to the reality of his coming (Bos 2008:49).

Luke's approach is different from that of Matthew in that he does not use the formula quotations, but lets the event speak to itself to declare its fulfilment. For example, Luke begins his Gospel with: "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things that have been fulfilled among us," (Luke 1:1 NKJV). In addition, in Luke 1:55 Mary sings a song in which she says: "He (God) spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and his seed forever." Furthermore, Paul uses the way of promise-fulfilment in his letters to preach Christ from the OT. For instance, in Romans

1:1-3 he writes “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the Gospel of God which he promised before through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (NJKV) (Greidanus 1999:210-211).

The promise and fulfilment model of preaching from the OT has a long and widespread application in the practice of preaching. The promises of God are rooted in the very name of God “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14) (Bos 2008:55).

### **Typology**

God fulfils his promises within redemptive history. Hence it can be concluded that promise-fulfilment happens within redemptive history. In as much as that is the case, so it is with typology, because God accomplishes his plan of redemption not only progressively from promise to fulfilment, but also uniformly through similarity of redemptive acts. Typology is essentially a way in which the constant principles of God’s working in history are traced, revealing a recurrent rhythm in history, which is taken up more fully and perfectly in the Gospel events. For instance, God dealt with Israel in the wilderness in a typical way that patterns the way he deals with the church. Two elements that characterise typology are correspondence between the OT and NT, and escalation. For example, Paul uses typology in Romans 5:14 in saying: “... Adam who is a type of the one who was to come”, meaning Jesus (Greidanus 1999:212-217).

### **Analogy**

The NT writers also use an analogy to preach Christ from the OT. The OT writers frequently highlight the continuities in history by casting later events and persons in the image of earlier events and persons. The analogy for preaching Christ from the OT can be described as a move from what God was to Israel to what God (through Christ) is for the NT Church. New Testament writers can apply to Jesus, Old Testament passages that speak of what God did in redeeming Israel. Several points can be noted about the analogy. First, it shows that Jesus (in the NT) continues God’s redemptive work in the OT. Second, an analogy can also show the correspondence between Israel and the church. For instance, in the OT Israel is depicted as the bride of Yahweh (Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 2:14-20), while the Church is regarded as the bride

of Christ in the NT. In addition, an analogy can be drawn to show the relationship between God and Israel and that of Christ and the Church (Greidanus 1999:220-222).

### **Longitudinal themes**

God has revealed himself and his will about his people in a progressive manner throughout history. This revelation shows itself as a longitudinal theme starting in the OT. New Testament authors extend these OT themes and reinterpret them in the light of Christ. For instance, the OT's major theme of redemption as found in Genesis 3:15 (the Protoevangelium), can be traced straight to Christ. In this case, the seed of the woman (Jesus) which crushes the head of the serpent (the devil) is indicative of Christ's salvific work on humanity. In addition, God's promise to Abram, that "In you, all families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3) further grounds the blessing of salvation through Christ, to all humanity. Furthermore, it can be seen that the central redemptive event of the OT, which is God's liberation of Israel from Egypt through the blood of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:13), can be applied to Christ's redemptive work through his blood. The Apostle Paul attests to this by writing that in Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1:7) (Greidanus 1999:222-223).

### **Contrast**

Whereas the afore-mentioned ways of preaching Christ from the OT focus on the continuity of the OT and the NT, contrast emphasises the discontinuity between these Testaments. For instance, in the OT God commanded the Israelites to destroy all the seven nations that inhabited the promised land (Deuteronomy 7:1-6). However, in the NT Jesus commands his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). In addition, while God's covenant with Israel required obedience to stipulations written externally on stone tablets, the prophet Jeremiah prophesied that the new covenant that God would make with his people would be written on the heart, as expressed by the statement: "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says that Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33, NKJV). In the NT Jesus uses this contrast in the Sermon on the Mount by repeatedly

saying that “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times ... but I say unto you ...” (Matthew 5:21-48) (Greidanus 1999:224-225).

### **4.8.3 Problems regarding interpreting Christ from the OT**

Two major challenges can be identified regarding interpreting Christ from the OT. First, although theologians use the label "Christology" for discussing biblical teaching about the Son, exegetes encounter challenges in using this designation for the Son in the OT because it is an anachronistic title. This emanates from the argument that the Son is not "the Christ" until he becomes incarnate. The second problem is the perennial emphasis that the OT contains theology and not Christology and is therefore theocentric and not Christocentric. However, this argument is opposed by the view that Christology is a sub-category of Theology and therefore a wedge should not be driven between the two (Gieschen 2004:109).

## **4.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter explored Christology as one of the fundamentals of Pentecostal theology. The chapter first discussed the concept of Christology, as the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ or the study of Jesus' self-understanding and of the titles, concepts, and conceptual patterns in which the NT Church expressed its faith in him. (Mueller 2010:277). This was followed by a discussion on the views on the origins of Jesus as the Messiah.

Regarding Christological controversies, this study considered Arianism (teaching asserting that Jesus Christ was the preeminent creature begotten by God the Father to mediate between the infinite, eternal and unknowable God and the finite, temporal world). The next Christological controversy is Apollinarism (a Christological view rooted in the theology that in the incarnation, the pre-existent person of Christ, took the place of the human rational soul of Jesus of Nazareth, thus rendering him less than fully human) and Nestorianism (a controversy about the understanding of the union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ).

Following Christological controversies is a discussion on the development of Christology from the New Testament, Patristic, Medieval and Reformation periods and beyond. This includes the response of contemporary Christians to the teachings of the

Councils. The section on Pentecostal Christology included features of Classical Pentecostal Christology as well as potential meeting points between Pentecostal Christology and ecumenical theologies. This was followed by the discussion on Spirit Christology.

Furthermore, this chapter considered some aspects of African Christology. The aim was to address the question of the relationship between Christ and African Christians: 'If Christ was to appear as the answer to the questions that Africans are asking, what would he look like?' In addition, this section discussed soteriological aspects of African Christology, as well as sources of African Christology, which entail Christ as a Liberator, Christ as a Saviour and Christ as a Healer.

Regarding the Christology of the New Testament, this study explored the Christological titles and metaphors of the New Testament, designations and symbols used for Jesus in Revelation and the Lamb Christology in Revelation 5.

The next major section discussed in this chapter was the concept of the Messiah in the OT. Greidanus (1999:203) mentions six major ways of preaching Christ from the OT: Redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfilment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes and contrast. However, this study pointed out that this principle presents some challenges, especially in the exegesis of the OT. The Christocentric exegesis of the OT is regarded as a spiritual eisegesis that reads Christ into the OT uncritically, being influenced by the study of Jesus in the NT (Gieschen 2004:106-107).

The next chapter (Chapter 5), presents the empirical data, the analysis of the empirical data, as well as the interpretation and discussion of the findings.



## CHAPTER 5

### EMPIRICAL DATA: SERMONS AND INTERVIEWS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents empirical data from 10 sermons of which two were observed live and eight were obtained from social media platforms, namely, YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp. The initial intention was to observe all sermons in live worship services. However, due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent restrictions on attendance of worship services, I resorted to the analysis of sermons from the above-mentioned sources. In addition, data were obtained from semi-structured interviews with five of the ten preachers whose sermons were analysed. These interviewees were selected randomly from the ten preachers.

Preparation for data analysis was done by first transcribing the audio tapes. Content analysis of data was adopted in both sermons and semi-structured interviews. The central idea in content analysis is to categorise the many words of the texts into much fewer content categories. Therefore, the basic procedure in content analysis is to design categories which are relevant to the research purpose and to sort all occurrences into these categories (Tesch 1990:79). This study used Atlas.ti computer software for the analysis of sermons and semi-structured interviews. Atlas.ti is a computer software that is used for coding and interpreting text. This can be followed by examining and defining relationships in the graphical network. Atlas.ti can be used to also import and display rich texts and construct code lists (Weitzman & Miles 1995:217-219; Gibbs 2011:107).

The idea of Barnard et al (2014:53) and Tesch (1990:95), that analysis of empirical data should not only be based on thinking about one's data, but should also be done with and through the data, was followed. This enhances the production of fruitful ideas. In this regard, the 'emic' point of view of the participants must be compared with the anthropological, sociological, psychological and theological outside perspective ('etic' point of view) of scholars in theology and liturgical (and homiletical) studies.

Sermons were analysed holistically by applying themes such as sermon types, styles of preaching and congregational participation, as shown in Table 5.1. However, data

from sermon contents were analysed according to emergent research themes as shown in Table 5.2.

Data from semi-structured interviews were analysed according to the themes stated in the qualitative semi-structured interview schedule (which is the same structure used for coding. See Table 5.3).

Concerning the interpretation, this research draws meaning from the findings of data analysis, according to lessons learned, information to compare with the literature, or personal experiences (Creswell 2009:230). In this way, the researcher makes sense of the data and asks questions about what was learned (cf. Creswell 2003:194-195). Interpretation and discussion of the findings from sermons were done together with analysis, by focusing on empirical research themes. However, interpretation and discussion of findings pertinent to the semi-structured interviews were done according to the themes in the semi-structured interview schedule (See Table 5.3). Furthermore, interpretation was also in response to the research questions.

The last section of this chapter reviews the appropriateness and relevance of the four tasks of Richard Osmer's Practical Theological Interpretation, which formed the theoretical framework of this study.

## 5.2 SERMONS

This section entails the presentation and analysis of data from sermons, as well as the interpretation of the findings. This is done according to sermon types, themes, styles of preaching, congregational participation and sermon contents.

### 5.2.1 Sermons: Themes, types and texts

<b>Sermon</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Scripture text</b>
Sermon A	Christ our righteousness	Topical	Jeremiah 23:5,6
Sermon B	The importance of God's word: God's word is exalted above all.	Topical	Psalms 38:3

Sermon C	The River of God: The need for the Holy Spirit	Expository	Isaiah 61:1-3; Ezekiel 47:1-12
Sermon D	The <i>Agape</i> love produces a better life for all (Preached on Christmas Day).	Textual	John 3:16
Sermon E	A call to abide (in Jesus).	Topical	John 15:4
Sermon F	The resurrection of Jesus Christ (Preached on Easter Sunday)	Topical	1 Corinthians 15:14; Philippians 3: 7-10.
Sermon G	The agenda of the Church.	Topical	Luke 4:18, 19
Sermon H	Men ought always to pray and not lose heart.	Topical	Luke 18:1
Sermon I	Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.	Textual	Hebrews 12:2
Sermon J	Jesus is the Good Shepherd.	Textual	John 10:11

**Table 5.1 Sermons: Themes, types and texts**

Of the ten sermons, six were topical, one sermon was expository and three other sermons were textual. Five had themes that had direct reference to Jesus Christ, namely, Christ our Righteousness; The resurrection of Jesus Christ; A call to abide (in Jesus); Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The Christmas Day sermon was about the love of God as shown in Jesus. Three other sermons also had indirect references to Jesus. For example, the sermon with the theme ‘Men ought always to pray and not lose heart’ was from the parable that Jesus gave in Luke 18:1-8, to show the importance of persistence in prayer. The sermon with the theme ‘The River of God’ dealt with the important role of the Holy Spirit in worship and had reference to the words of Jesus as stated in Luke 4:18-19. Furthermore, the sermon on the agenda of the church was about the need

for the church to preach the gospel to all the oppressed people as Jesus did and commanded. Only one sermon did not explicitly refer to Jesus. This sermon was about the importance of God's word. It can be said that of the ten sermons, the preference was for textual and topical sermons.

### 5.2.2 Styles of preaching

The styles in the sermons cannot be categorically classified because sometimes, in one sermon, there was a combination of styles. This section aims to show that the preachers were more inclined to one style than another in their preaching.

#### Rhetorical preaching

Two of the ten sermons were more rhetorical than others, namely the sermon on prayer and the one about the resurrection of Jesus. The sermon on the resurrection of Jesus aimed at persuading the audience not to be satisfied with the Christian faith without the accompanying power. However, the most rhetorical was Sermon H (Men ought always to pray and not faint). In this sermon, the preacher used repetition to drive his points home. The preacher referred to the story in the Bible where the Apostle Peter was imprisoned, and the church prayed for him. Subsequently, Peter was miraculously released from prison by the angel of God after the chains around him were loosed. The preacher used this as an illustration that when we pray bondages in people's lives are broken. He said: *"And because of the prayer of the church in Mary's house ... the chains around Peter broken off...Thank God who can make sure the chains in your life, in your spouse, in your family, in your health are broken down.... If the chains broke off the life of Peter, chains are breaking off you now, in the name of Jesus! Breaking off ... Oh! chains are breaking off! Chains are breaking off! ...[Repeats]. I hear the sound tonight that declares in the realm of the atmosphere, that declares in the atmosphere now. Chains are breaking off! [Repeats and speaks in tongues] Chains are falling off now in Jesus' name!"*

The sermons referred to, in the paragraph above, attested to the fact that with regard to rhetoric in preaching, the preacher's task is to persuade, although that particular rhetoric must be informed by biblical theology, as well as the Bible's rhetoric rather than purely literary interests (Dykstra 2001:11-13).

## **Prophetic preaching**

The sermon about the agenda of the church was prophetic in the sense that it aimed at making the audience see their work of making disciples just as God wanted it. It encouraged believers to carry out the Great Commission. Prophetic preaching is not only about societal issues such as social injustice and politics, but it is fundamentally about calling the people of God to radically reorient their worldview and consciousness to perceive the world as God sees it (cf. Tisdale 2010:3-9).

In addition, the sermon about the river that flowed from the temple, as seen in Ezekiel 47:1-12, was prophetic in the sense that it aimed at encouraging the church to understand and embrace the work of the Holy Spirit in individual Christian life and the congregation's corporate worship.

## **Narrative preaching**

The sermon on Easter Sunday was not only evangelistic and rhetorical, but the preacher also approached the events of Easter Sunday as a narrative, starting with Jesus's prediction of his resurrection, then Jesus's crucifixion and burial, to the story of the open tomb. This storytelling also included the preacher's imagination of the events that took place. This attested to the fact that Narrative preaching includes the form in which the sermon is intentionally shaped by the form of the narrative text or follows the structure of a short story (Eslinger 2002:63-64). Another characteristic of narrative preaching is when preachers use their imagination and think metaphorically to "name grace in human experience" (Elliot 2000:1).

Other sermons did not show particularly remarkable styles but had clear discernible aims. The sermons on Christ our Righteousness and Jesus as the Good Shepherd were meant to show the goodness of God and to encourage believers going through various life situations. The sermon on Christmas Day aimed at calling people to salvation by accepting the love of God as embodied in Jesus. Sermon B was teaching the importance of the word of God. In Sermon I, the preacher taught the concepts in Hebrews 12:2, namely, author, finisher and faith as they relate to Jesus and his work.

### 5.2.3 Congregational participation

There were various forms of congregational participation during preaching. In sermon A (observed live), the congregation was lively and responded to the preacher with shouts of “Amen!” and “Halleluyah!” In sermon B, which was also observed live, congregants participated by reading the texts in different versions of the Bible as requested by the preacher. In Sermons C and D, the preachers read the text themselves as the congregation listened. In Sermon G, (The Agenda of the Church), the preacher was alone in the room as he preached on a virtual platform. As such there was no observable congregational participation.

Sermon E (on YouTube) was characterised by the loudest responses to the preacher’s sermon and the preacher punctuated the sermon with some worship songs. This resulted in some congregants also praying during the sermon. During Sermon F (The resurrection of Jesus), there was a hype of activity, particularly at the end, as some congregants were called to the altar to be prayed for, while others were ushers.

In Sermon, H congregants participated in a way of individuals praying successively for specific prayer items which the preacher identified. Since this was a virtual platform, the preacher requested the congregants to type their prayer requests or type certain numerals such as 1, 2 or 3, as a way of showing that they agreed with what he was saying. For instance, he would say “*Chains are breaking! ...Please type that now if you are in agreement, type that now, [that] ‘chains are breaking in my life’.*” Again, he would say “*And if there is anyone who has any prayer request, please type it right here ...Please if you can, type your prayer request so that we can labour and pray for you, with you and on your behalf ... in the name of Jesus Christ.*”

Based on the above data, it can be said that in the two sermons which were observed (Sermons A and B), as well as one of those recorded on YouTube, and one from Facebook, there were clear indications of active congregational participation. In particular, the sermon on Easter Sunday had the greatest participation. Participation in the sermons included being an interpreter, reading from one’s Bible at the preacher’s request, and being part of the preacher’s illustrations. Furthermore, other congregants participated as ushers for those who responded to the altar call for healing, as the preacher demonstrated the power of Jesus’s resurrection.

These various acts of congregational participation can be explained by the idea of Ma & Ma (2010:155-156), that the most noticeable feature of Pentecostal preaching is the active participation of the audience during preaching, in the sense that the audience expresses their agreement with the preacher by voicing an ‘Amen!’ or ‘Halleluyah!’ As such, Pentecostal preaching becomes responsive, dialogical and lively.

#### 5.2.4 Sermon contents

This section entails the presentation and analysis as well as interpretation of sermon contents. For purposes of analysis and presentation, all the ten sermons were merged into one document. Codes were then developed from quotations about the same idea, through Atlas.ti computer software. These codes were then organised into code groups with similar themes. From these ten sermons, 115 quotations were organised into 14 codes. These codes were subsequently organised into six code groups. These six code groups can be shown graphically as networks. The table below shows the organisation of code groups (representing themes) and codes (which represent sub-themes). This section is organised in such a way that data from all subthemes is first presented, after which interpretation then follows.

	<b>CODE GROUP (THEME)</b>	<b>CODE (SUB-THEME)</b>
1.	Abiding in Jesus Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of abiding in Jesus</li> <li>• Impact of abiding in Christ</li> </ul>
2	<i>Agape</i> Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kinds of love</li> <li>• Characteristics of the <i>Agape</i> love</li> </ul>
3	Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus and prayer</li> <li>• Power of Prayer</li> </ul>
4	God’s word and God’s promises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of God’s word</li> <li>• God’s promises</li> </ul>
5	The character of Jesus Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who Jesus is</li> <li>• What Jesus did</li> <li>• Christ and Christmas</li> <li>• Jesus and prayer</li> </ul>
6.	The resurrection of Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaning of the resurrection</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of the resurrection</li> </ul>
--	--	--

**Table 5.2 Themes and subthemes from analysis of sermons**

### 5.2.4.1 Abiding in Jesus

#### Benefits of abiding in Jesus

Preacher E read from John 15 and emphasised the importance of Christians abiding in Jesus. Abiding in Jesus has the benefits of producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit and it makes a believer grow towards spiritual maturity. He emphasised: “... *why do we have to abide in him and he in us? There are things in us that have to be produced. There are things that we have to produce [as fruit] Oh my God! We must produce fruit. The one thing through which we have to win the world is to be fruitful.*”

In addition, abiding in Jesus is important in that Jesus says if we abide in him, we will ask for anything, and it will be done for us (John 15:7). He supported this point (paraphrasing Jesus’s words) by saying: “*If you abide in me and my words in you, you will ask for whatever you need, [and] I will do it because I can see your position.*”

Preacher E also mentioned that spiritual growth comes as a result of abiding in Christ. He said: “*Growth does not come in any way, but it comes because we abide in the Word himself ... we grow because we maintain our position in Christ.*” He further mentioned that for a Christian to grow spiritually, he/she must read the word of God.

#### Impact of abiding in Christ

The preacher mentioned that abiding in Christ impacts other people in the sense that it becomes a form of witnessing for Christ. He asserted: “*Wherever we come, people ought not to cry, there must be life. Without speaking ... by your mere conduct. ... You have to show life. You cannot show this life without abiding. We suck this life [from the vine] because we are the branches. We suck this life and then pass it to [other] people.*” This is in line with the view that in Classical Pentecostalism there is a pervasive emphasis on personal holiness, and the place of works in the life of a believer, to work out their salvation (Chetty 2009:4). This good conduct enables Christians to be true witnesses (for Christ) who impact their communities in a good way.

#### 5.2.4.2 **Agape love**

##### **Kinds of love**

To make the characteristics of the love of God (*Agape*) clearer the preacher compared it with three other kinds of love. These include Eros, which, according to the preacher is “... *attraction love, the love that normally happens when we want to benefit out of something.*” The preacher went on to describe *Philia* love as “*a love of friends, the love of equals... people we benefit from... people who think the same way we think.*” Furthermore, he described *Storge* love as a love for parents and family members.

##### **Characteristics of Agape love**

According to the preacher, the characteristics of *Agape* love are: It is from the stronger to the weaker, it is a love that gives the best and it is the love that does not disappoint. In his words, he said: “*But we present the love of God. The love that does not disappoint ... Halleluyah! I am presenting to you the love of God. Something that takes you from one level to another, and then takes you to another higher level.*” He went on to emphasise that the *Agape* love is the love that “... *is always by a greater to the weaker... It’s a love we cannot measure. It’s a love we cannot quantify. It’s a love we don’t even pay back for...Love for the benefit [good] of the beneficiary... Love that gives the best.*”

This sermon aimed at calling people to salvation by showing them God’s unconditional love. This was important especially for Christmas Day because as stated by Mashau (2013:5), one of the basic tenets in Pentecostal teaching is salvation that is earned by faith in Christ. Central to Pentecostal preaching is the call to repent, believe and accept Christ as personal Saviour.

#### 5.2.4.3 **Prayer**

##### **Jesus and prayer**

Preacher H took time to explain what Jesus knew about prayer and how he practised it before he taught his disciples that men should pray consistently and persistently. He said: “*Jesus was a man of prayer and he is saying these words knowing very well what prayer can do. He knew the potency of prayer. He is a man who spent real hours ... and days in prayer. He is a man who knew how to connect with the Father while he*

*was on earth ... He knew the language of prayer. He knew the importance of the language and voice of prayer. He understood that prayer is a weapon that he used to fight any battle at any given time. He knew that through prayer, things that are impossible, become possible ... He knew the power of prayer. He knew that prayer is able to bring great things in a person's life. Now he is talking to his disciples and sharing with them the secret to the success of his ministry. He says 'Men ought always to pray and not to lose heart.'*"

While the sermon was not about Jesus per se, Jesus is referred to, as someone who taught about prayer because he had the experience of communication with God and the power of prayer. As such, he is not only teaching about being persistent in prayer, but he is also a role model for the believers, regarding prayer. From this, we learn that a teacher of God's word becomes effective if he/she embodies his/her teaching. This was also mentioned in the interviews, that a preacher has to be exemplary in what he/she preaches. Furthermore, this is also true in the light of one of the three basic implications of the preacher as a pastor, that the preacher's personality, character, experience, and relationship to the hearers should have an impact on the hearers (Johnson 2015:33).

### **The power of prayer**

Preacher H preached about the power of prayer in the life of the church. The preacher emphasised the importance of prayer and also mentioned several ways in which prayer impacts the lives of individual Christians. He used the illustration of the Apostle Peter who was freed from his chains in prison because the Christians were praying for him. He said: *"If there are chains, those chains tonight can be broken off and broken down because of the power of prayer. Thank God who was responsible for the breaking off of the chains in the life of Peter. Thank God who can make sure the chains in your life, in your spouse, in your family, in your health are broken..."*

#### **5.2.4.4 God's word and God's promises**

##### **Importance of God's word**

Sermon B was about the importance of God's word. The preacher read Psalms 138:2, which says: "I will worship toward Your holy temple and praise Your name for your loving kindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your

Name” (NKJV). He compared the different versions of the Bible regarding this verse. He preferred the King James Version, which made a distinction between the word and the name. In his words he said: *“Now listen to what King James Version says: ‘I will worship ... I will praise your name, for thou has magnified thy word far above thy name.’ King James Version makes a distinction. It speaks about the word and again about the name. The other versions mix the two ... the Zulu version says the name and the word. In other words, it mixes the name and the word. [But] the King James Version makes a distinction to say there is the word and there is the name. Which one is magnified above the other? ... I want the people of God to understand that God honours his word above his name...”*

### **God’s promises**

According to Preacher B, the fact that God has highly exalted his word, to which he is faithful, gives believers reason to trust him. He emphasised: *“So ... this gives us the idea and assurance that when God speaks, it is done. When he speaks he has already done what he says. Please go to Jeremiah 1:12. I want my congregation to understand that for God, the most important thing that he honours, and is unable to disregard ... is his word.”*

The preacher then used Jeremiah 1:12 to illustrate God’s faithfulness to his word. He probed the congregation to repeat with him what the text said: *“I wait on what brethren? [the congregation responds in affirmation: ‘my word’] to perform it. Once God speaks something, when he is done, he waits upon it [to perform it] ... so that it is fulfilled. What pleases God is to see the fulfilment of what he has said ... Halleluyah!”*

The preacher showed that Pentecostals believe in the timelessness and universal application of God’s word, they believe that the miracle-working God of ancient believers is the same God of today’s believers, as mentioned by Ma & Ma (2010:151).

#### **5.2.4.5 The Character of Jesus**

##### **Who Jesus is**

First, Preacher A referred to Jesus as our righteousness, and as the Sun of Righteousness with healing on his wings. Referring to what the commentary in his

Bible stated about Jesus [as interpreted from Jeremiah 23:5,6], he said: *“And in my centre column it says Yahweh Tsidkenu ... the LORD our Righteousness. ...”*

From the Book of Malachi 4:2, the preacher explained that Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness with healing on his wings. He then used the metaphor of the sun to show that just as the sun appears and darkness flees, so will Jesus appear in difficult situations in the lives of believers. He emphasised: *“You know brethren, Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. .... You see, brethren, Jesus is likened to the sun because the sun is faithful. It rises ... there is one thing about the sun, it rises. Sometimes you think you are in darkness, nothing will come right. But Jesus is the sun for the soul. He is the Sun of Righteousness. Even if it seems dark, even if it seems there is no hope, but just as the sun appears, Jesus is the sun, he comes up, he appears ... That is why I am not worried, even if it seems it’s hard, I know that the Sun of Righteousness is there. It will rise to you also. Even if you are in terrible darkness ... even if there is no hope, even if people have written you off ...”*

The use of the metaphor of the sun to carry over its characteristics in explaining what Jesus does to the believers was a beautiful literary form whereby a name or expression is applied to a person or object to which it is imaginatively but not literally applied (cf. Jones 1999:173).

Second, about Jesus as the prophesied Messiah, Preacher C read Isaiah 61:1 and explained it as a reference to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. He alluded that the prophet Isaiah, though having prophesied over seven hundred years before the first advent of Christ, was more accurate in describing Jesus than most prophets. According to the preacher, this could only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit. In his words, he said: *“...Isaiah is probably the most accurate and articulate prophet or author of the Old Testament concerning the person of Jesus. He describes in his book, his coming, his birth, he describes the work of Christ Jesus for the salvation of nations clearer than many prophets of the OT. He even goes further to describe Christ Jesus in the exact vocabulary that Christ uses to describe himself. For example, if you read the Book of Isaiah 11:1, he refers to Christ Jesus as the Stem of Jesse and the Branch of his roots. And the words of Christ in the Book of Revelation 22:16, there he describes himself as the Root and the Offspring of David. And quite important here is that Isaiah writes 700-800 years before the advent of Jesus Christ revealed in flesh.*

*And this is important because it is not easy to do so clearly except only if you are prophesying and operating under the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit of God.”*

In this sermon the preacher also used the metaphor of the water in the river that flowed from the temple, (Ezekiel 47:1-12), to liken it to the Holy Spirit as mentioned in Isaiah 61:1. According to the preacher, the water of this river represents the Spirit of God, whose movement must be experienced in the Church today. He explained this point in this way: *“There was a river that was proceeding from the dwelling place of God, because where God is, there is an overflow, and that overflow is the Spirit of God. The overflow, the river is the Spirit of God. That is where we have been called, in the life of the overflow. That is the life of the church.”* This sermon was an example of how Pentecostals link Christology to pneumatology. This shows that while Jesus is the anointed Messiah to save, heal and deliver, the Holy Spirit empowers believers in everyday life and ministry.

Third, in Sermon D, the focus was God’s love (*Agape* love) as shown when God sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross. Preacher D showed good exegesis of John 3:16, as he explained the concept of love by making a distinction among the different kinds of love: *Eros*, was explained as *“...passionate love, attraction love. The love that normally happens when we want to benefit out of something ...”*; *Philia* love, which he explained as *... “a love of friends, the love of equals... people we benefit from... people who think the same way we think”*; as well as *Storge* love, a love for parents and family. The preacher went further to explain the concept of giving as entailed in the text. Last, he explained the reason for this giving as God’s desire for people to have eternal life.

It can be said that this sermon entailed the Salvation-Historical Christology. In this regard, the story of Jesus is told as the climactic story of how God acted for the salvation and renewal of both his people Israel and the whole creation. Therefore, Jesus appears as the one who has a unique mission from God to be the Saviour of the world (Bauckham 2004:126).

Fourth, in Sermon E the preacher referred to John 15:1-5, where Jesus said to his disciples that he was the true vine, and they are the branches. In his words he said: *“A call to abide ... Brethren the place to which we have been called is in Christ ... Amen!... When the gospel is being preached, ... it comes in power. As it comes in this*

*power you are not brought to a church. The church is a place where you are helped to grow. The person to whom we have been brought is the one who died for us.” He continued to say: “... Abide in me...and I in you as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself ... In other words, God cannot abide in us if we have not started by ... abiding in him. It is us who have to start abiding in him ...”*

This sermon, which used one of the seven “I am” statements of Jesus in the Johannine gospel, was an exhortation to faithful and persistent faith in Jesus, for spiritual growth. That is, abiding in Jesus is a prerequisite for the manifestation of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The sermon was about the dependence of believers on Jesus, without whom they can do nothing. It can be said that this total dependence of believers on Jesus gives credence to the view that at the heart of Pentecostal spirituality, is not only pneumatocentrism but also a Christocentrism in which Jesus is perceived holistically in five interrelated roles: Saviour, Sanctifier, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, Healer and Soon-coming Eschatological King (cf. Kärkkäinen 2013:207-208).

Fifth, Sermon J was about Jesus as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. The preacher appropriately applied the metaphor of a shepherd to show how Jesus deals with believers. The preacher mentioned the qualities of a good shepherd as a person who understands the seasons, who understands the flock, protects the flock and provides for it. He used the text of John 10:11 to encourage the congregants that even in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is someone who understands this time, and he will take care of their needs as individuals. That person is Jesus. He said: *“A shepherd should be someone who understands seasons because we know in a year we have seasons. But during all seasons, there is no season when the animals take a break from feeding. Whether it is winter, whether it is summer, whether it is whatever season, the shepherd’s job is to make sure that the animals are provided for. So, a shepherd is a person who understands seasons. He knows how to provide for the flock according to different seasons and keep them safe and healthy... I want to say to you that even in this season, God’s heart is about you, it is in [about] you. I want you to know that the heart of Jesus, all that he cares for, even during this time, is about you.”*

This preacher showed one of the characteristics of the preacher as a pastor. According to Long (2005a:31-32; cf. Johnson 2015:33), pastoral preachers tend to look for those



texts in the Scripture that are about real-life situations and have a healing possibility thereon.

Sixth, Preacher I, in his exegesis of Hebrews 12:2, explained the main concepts in the text, namely author, finisher and faith. This gave a sound structure to the sermon and enhanced the understanding of the text by the audience. The preacher went further to explain that before Jesus was born, the Jews were taught the Law of Moses. He mentioned that by then the emphasis of the teaching was gaining righteousness by keeping the Law. However, when Jesus came, he introduced the idea of faith. This then, according to the preacher, made Jesus the author of our faith. In his own words he stated: “... *in Israel, the Jews were still fellowshiping but holding on to the religion, ... according to the standard that they received based on what Moses gave them, ... it was simply about righteousness through the work that you do. Now Jesus Christ arrived during that time as the author. Now when he arrived, he started teaching. ...and then he introduced teaching called faith. ... or we can call it a belief system or believing. He was basically saying to them it is not by works but it is by believing in the Messiah, that I [Jesus] am the Messiah...*”

Furthermore, in this sermon, the preacher corroborated the concept of Jesus’s authorship of our faith in terms of his seven “I am” statements in the Gospel of John. That is, I am the bread of life (John 6:35), I am the light of the world (John 8:12), I am the door (John 10:9), I am the good shepherd (John 10:11), I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25), I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6) and I am the true vine (John 15:1).

It can also be said that this sermon approached preaching from the ‘*didaskain*’ (teaching) perspective, which is preaching that entails the clear facts of the case worth knowing in the message. *Didaskain* has its function in the building up of an existing congregation, by instructing it in a previously unknown doctrine. (Bonhoeffer 2002:32).

### **What Jesus did**

In Sermon G the preacher stated that when Jesus spoke the words in Luke 4:18-19, that he was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, he was stating what the agenda of the Church ought to be. He said: “*My point of departure is that to me*

*this passage [referring to Luke 4:18-19] is like the State of the Church address. It is addressing what the Church should do. If we are not doing this, automatically we are now out of the agenda which God has given us to fulfil. And I want you to understand, beloved, that Jesus when he came here, he was an example for us of what the Father wanted us to do through him. Indeed, he was always preaching the gospel, always healing the sick, always delivering the oppressed, casting out demons.”*

The preacher emphasised that the reason for the anointing was to fulfil God’s agenda for the Church, which is preaching the gospel to others: *“Now I want to say to you that when the Bible says the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, or he has anointed me, the question is: Anointed for what? Anointed to do the work which we are called for. Anointed to preach, anointed to heal, anointed to deliver the demonic oppressed. That’s what anointing is for.”*

Furthermore, the preacher linked this anointing to the power of the Holy Spirit through which the gospel has to be preached. He referred to Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 2:4 by saying: *“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”*

### **Christ and Christmas**

Preacher D mentioned that Jesus is the embodiment of God’s love and a gift to humanity. Therefore, we cannot celebrate Christmas without Jesus being at the centre. The preacher concluded: *“If you dare celebrate Christmas and you have forgotten Jesus or you have walked away from Jesus, [and] you have turned to trust other things, as you celebrate this Christmas and the season thereof, ask yourself what you will say to God one day ... if you reject so great a love.”*

This sermon highlighted one of the important points which were alluded to in the semi-structured interviews, that Jesus has to be central in everything that is done in the church. However, in this case, the preacher was referring to the centrality of Jesus in the individual believer’s life as they celebrated Christmas.

#### 5.2.4.6 The resurrection of Jesus

Preacher F, on Easter Sunday, did not follow a structured form of textual exposition but used storytelling as a way of explaining the events of the resurrection. As mentioned by Johnson (2015:34), the preacher, as a storyteller/poet focuses on the narrative dimension of the sermon and the poetic expression of language. In addition, this sermon captured the other essential traits of a preacher as a storyteller/poet, which are: First, a more critical and effective use of illustrations, and second, the whole sermon being narratively structured.

##### **The meaning of the resurrection**

The preacher emphasised the significance of the resurrection in that it was the fulfilment of the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples before his death as mentioned in Luke 24:5-9. He said: *“And when he was killed, he fulfilled the prophecy that was spoken. In his resurrection, he fulfilled the prophecy that he spoke. In verse 8 it is said the disciples remembered his words. This means, to them, it became a reminder that this Jesus said that he would die. Truly, just as he is no longer among the dead, what he spoke was true.”*

In addition, the resurrection gives essence to the faith and preaching of the Christians. He stated: *“Now when Paul writes to the church at Corinth, he says if Jesus has not risen our preaching is in vain. If Jesus has not risen even your faith is vain. In fact, he says if Jesus has not risen then the resurrection of the dead when the trumpet will sound will not happen. So, it means that we must go and stay at home because there is no reason for our worship [and fellowship]. But the power behind our preaching is from the resurrection. The power of our faith is in line with the resurrection ...”*

##### **Benefits of the resurrection**

Preacher F mentioned that the resurrection power should manifest itself in the lives of Christians individually and collectively as a church in our present lives, not just as a historical record of the Early Church. The preacher said that Christians do not only have to know Jesus, but they must also know the power of his resurrection. He went further to say: *“...What is Paul saying? The power that raised Jesus from the dead is not a myth [He repeats in Zulu]. The power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power that has to be experienced. It is not the power to [only] read about and be content in your heart, but it is the power that you read and after you read about, you*

*experience that power... The power that raised Jesus from the dead is not theoretical, but it is practical. ... that I may know him personally, but that should not be the end, but I should also know the power of his resurrection. You see, there is the experiential power, that when you talk about power you don't talk about something that you heard about, but about the power that you personally experienced."*

Furthermore, the fact that Jesus had told his disciples that he would rise on the third day, which he did, showed that he could be trusted to fulfil what he promised. What the preacher said attests to the idea that Jesus's resurrection, together with his ministry, crucifixion and post-resurrection appearances are crucial in the lives of believers in the sense that they formed the basis of his followers' understanding of his nature. This led to the development of formal creeds (Watson 2010:107-108).

Based on data from the ten sermons, it can be concluded that seven of them focused directly on who Jesus is according to the Scriptures, while two of the sermons focused on what he did, and only one had little reference to Jesus since it focused on God and his word. References to Christ seemed to be based on the view of Contemporary Christologies, particularly those of the historical direction, which engages with the testimony of the Scriptures (especially the gospels), as well as the views of Christ as a Revealer and Saviour in world religions (O'Collins 2013:417-418).

In sermons which did not have a reference to Jesus in the theme, the contents thereof stemmed from what Jesus had spoken, for example, the sermon on the importance of consistency in prayer was from Jesus's parable of the widow and the judge (Luke 18:1-8). In addition, the sermon on the agenda of the church, which encouraged believers to have the great commission as the focus of the church, had its text in the words of Jesus as found in Luke 4:18-19.

It can be said that most of the sermons referred to the person of Jesus and his teachings to some extent. However, this might have been influenced to a great extent, by the researcher's choice of sermons from the social media platforms.

### **5.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

This section presents and analyses data and interprets the findings from semi-structured interviews. As in the analysis of sermons, all five interview transcripts were

merged into one document. Thereafter eighteen (15) codes were developed from hundred and twenty (120) quotations through the Atlas.ti computer software. From the fifteen codes, five (5) code groups were developed in line with the thematic structure of the semi-structured interview schedule.

The table below shows the code groups (themes) and the codes (sub-themes):

THEME	SUBTHEME
1. Preaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the notion of preaching.</li> <li>• Fundamental components of preaching</li> <li>• Other roles of the preacher besides proclamation of the word.</li> <li>• The role of the preacher in effectively engaging the congregation</li> </ul>
2. Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pentecostalism and how it differs from other church traditions.</li> <li>• Characteristics of Pentecostal preaching.</li> <li>• Differences between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church traditions.</li> <li>• Effects of cultural contexts of the congregation on Pentecostal preaching.</li> </ul>
3. Christology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the concept of Christology</li> <li>• Importance of Christology and its expression in Western Reef Region.</li> <li>• Christology and Pneumatology</li> </ul>
4. State of Preaching in the Western Reef Region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The present state of preaching in the Western Reef Region.</li> <li>• Factors affecting preaching in the Western Reef Region</li> </ul>
5. Improving preaching in the Western Reef Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theological training of pastors</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Themes and sub-themes from qualitative semi-structured interviews**

### 5.3.1 Preaching

In this section data analysis and interpretation respond to the research question: *What is preaching and what are the fundamental elements of preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region as it happens currently?*

#### 5.3.1.1 Preaching: Analysis and presentation

As shown in the table above, the subthemes in this category include understanding of the notion of preaching, fundamental components of preaching, other roles of the preacher besides proclamation of the word, as well as the role of the preacher in effectively engaging the congregation.

##### Understanding the notion of preaching

For Preacher E, preaching involved the communication of God's word, taking into consideration preparation of the sermon, textual exegesis and correct interpretation of the text. He expressed it in this way: *"In a simplest form preaching, I regard as communication, communicating to people that which has been communicated to you by the Lord himself through his word ... ensuring that things like how to properly arrange a sermon, your exegesis, ensuring that you are hermeneutically correct ..."*

Preacher F said: *"Preaching... is conveying or putting across a message of the gospel or what we refer to as the good news. It is receiving from the Bible and being able to convey the message that has been extracted from the Bible to a particular audience. And obviously the preaching should be centralised or should be guided by the Scripture itself."*

Preacher G expressed preaching in terms of its components, which he referred to as first, Hermeneutics (the science of preaching), which deals with the interpretation of the biblical passage. Second, Homiletics, which he explained as the act of preaching, which in his words *"deals much with contextualisation of the passage you read ... using the principles of interpretation."* He emphasised that *"... you don't take a verse and run away with it. You have to first read the verse and see that the verse has no meaning or good interpretation unless you read passages before and passages after."*

The third component of preaching, according to his description was Apologetics, which

he referred to as *“the proof of preaching.”* This ensures that *“a believer you are preaching to, should be able to defend for his own faith.”*

According to preacher H preaching can be described as *“a proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the spreading of that message using mainly the voice, though if you look ... the time and age in which we are, I also want to believe that you could also then use the non-verbal forms.”* Preacher J expressed preaching simply as the communication of the word of God to an audience.

### **Fundamental components of preaching**

Regarding the main components of preaching, interviewees had various views. Preacher E stated that the important components of preaching are the preacher, the audience, the Holy Spirit and the Scripture. When listing these components in his words he said: *“First, the preacher must be there, second the audience must be there, and of course in the first instance the preacher must first prepare himself for preaching before he can even prepare the sermon ... there is no preaching without the audience, there is no preaching without the preacher, there is no preaching without the Holy Spirit.”* Responding to the researcher’s question about the role of the Scripture in preaching he said: *“Oh yes, the role of the Scripture is very important, because in preaching you are transferring the mind of God to the people, and the mind of God is in the Scriptures. In other words, the Scripture is at the centre of things, because the Scripture, as we always say, it’s the written word of God.”*

Preacher F emphasised the centrality of the Scripture. He said, *“...as I mentioned previously, it [preaching] needs to be centralised on, or it should be extracted from the Bible. That is number one.... So, the preacher must then be able to stay on the subject matter, or the theme ...so that the preacher must not find himself speaking or quoting the Scripture out of context and being all over the show.”* He also mentioned factors that have to do with the character of the preacher such as the right motives for preaching. In addition, important in preaching would be for the preacher to understand his audience, the purpose of his preaching as well as the occasion in which he/she is preaching. He alluded to relevance to the occasion, in this way: *And the preacher must also understand the occasion in which he is preaching to. Because you can’t be talking about death in a wedding, or vice versa. So, the preacher needs to understand his*



*audience and the occasion and so forth. ... The preacher also needs to, while preaching ...be relevant, and address specific needs for a specific occasion.”*

For Preacher G, the definition of preaching also entailed its main components, namely Hermeneutics, Homiletics and Apologetics. These theological aspects are important, if meaningful preaching has to take place. For him, these are indispensable elements of preaching, which enhance good understanding of the sermon by the audience.

Preacher H was more extensive in his list of the components of preaching, which included the preacher, the audience, the Bible, the cultural context of the congregation, as well as the need for authority in preaching and persuasion of the audience. He articulated the important components of preaching in these words: *“I think needless to mention that [you have] the preacher ... but really when we say preaching has taken place, we are actually talking about the actual message that is broadcasted or that is delivered, which therefore says it has to be, it has to have as its basis, the Scriptures, the word of God, the Bible. Of course, one can add a lot of other things, depending on your context, the cultures, the people you are speaking to, the relevance, and all that. ... Alongside that there comes a certain element of authority to that preaching and I believe that there is persuasion to it as well, because you speak to people ... then you want them to move to the understanding, the admission and the giving of themselves to Christ Jesus.”*

According to Preacher J, important components of preaching are preparation of the sermon, and the Bible, because the sermon must be Scripture-based. He also mentioned the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and prayer as other components of preaching. About the Holy Spirit, he said: *“But more importantly, in preaching, the preacher needs to be led by the Holy Spirit. It is rather important so that the preacher does not speak out of the well of his knowledge but speak out of the well of the one who has sent him.”*

### **Other roles of the preacher besides proclamation**

For Preacher E, the other roles of the preacher in preaching pertain to his/her conduct at the pulpit such as not leaning on the pulpit, not walking around unnecessarily, and making sure that he/she looks at the entire audience and not in one direction.

Preacher G said the other role of the preacher is to be a people-person to both believers and unbelievers, in a sense of being a communal leader. He said: *“Yeah, the preacher should be [a] people-person, [repeats] both saved and unsaved, in other words, he must become a communal leader at the same time.”*

Preacher J said that besides proclaiming the word, the preacher should have integrity and be exemplary in conduct so that he/she can be trusted as a communicator of God’s word. He referred to the incidents where there were negative reports about preachers, particularly in South Africa by saying: *“Like I say this was taken in the context of South Africa, and what is happening, what are people seeing, more especially negative news about the preachers.”* By this, he referred to instances where in some Charismatic churches, congregants were told to drink petrol and eat grass under the pretext that it was something that God had said.

### **The role of the preacher in effectively engaging the congregation**

Preacher E mentioned that to effectively engage the congregation, at the end of the sermon, the preacher has to challenge the audience to check if they heard and understood him/her. This is particularly necessary for evangelistic sermons where people are called upon to decide on giving their lives to Jesus. He said: *“The response from the audience is critical ... the audience has to be engaged in one way or the other in preaching because this is not just talking but it’s driving a point that will need ... to ensure that your audience has heard what is it that you were actually trying to say.”*

Preacher F mentioned that for the preacher to effectively engage the congregation, he/she needs to use simple language for the congregation to understand. He said: *“... I strongly believe that the preacher must be as simple as possible on the basis that when we start using theological jargon, we may just be talking to ourselves. So, it is rather important that the preacher simplifies the message as much as possible.”*

Furthermore, he mentioned body language as another way of connecting with the congregation. He said: *“The body language also assists in putting points of emphasis on the message that is being conveyed and it also puts expressions where one would be highlighting the major points or the main points of the message that is being conveyed.”*

According to Preacher H, engaging the congregation in preaching could take the form of random eye contact, depending on the number of people in the audience. He also mentioned that interjections like Amen! and Halleluyah! are essential in checking if people are following the sermon. He went on to say: *“Sometimes you can even be more specific and say ‘Are you following me? Do you get it?’”* He explained that this will also depend on whether one is preaching or teaching.

According to Preacher J, the preacher’s eye contact with the congregation is essential in effectively engaging the congregation during preaching. This helps the preacher to see if he/she still has the attention of the audience. In his words, he said: *“I want to see if they are getting what I am saying. If it means then I must change whatever my approach, ... so the preacher should also be able to pick up the response from his audience, Are people getting sleepy? Are people excited? Are people listening attentively? ...”*

Preacher J explained the importance of asking questions during preaching by saying: *“But one of the things is that the preacher, in one way or the other, must be able to engage the audience as necessity arises. And one of the things really, is to ask questions ... to pose something that will then necessitate a response back, a feedback of some sort ... I would say of Pentecostals, you would find us more especially using the word ‘Halleluyah!’, ‘Amen!’ And then they respond back [with] ‘Amen! Halleluyah!’”*

However, Preacher G mentioned that while interaction is necessary for preaching, traditionally preachers did not pose questions to their audiences because they (preachers) were the only people who had the Bible. As such, it was difficult for the congregants to engage him on issues from a book that they did not have. In his words, he said: *“...the tradition has been that of the pastor speaking from the front and addressing the general assembly. In fact, before the era of Reformation, the only person who was able to have a copy of the Bible was one person, the preacher. It was not easy for the general membership to have a meaningful discussion with the person speaking information which he got from the book which they don’t have. It started like that... But I believe that ... there should be interaction between the preacher and the audience.”*

### 5.3.1.2 Preaching: Interpretation and discussion of the findings

*First*, while most of the interviewees stated that preaching involves the proclamation of God's word or the gospel to an audience, one of them preferred the concept of communicating the word of God rather than proclamation. For him, a proclamation was somehow technical. This is partly true because proclamation refers to the kerygmatic dimension of preaching, while there are still other forms such as teaching. Other interviewees included preparation of the sermon, textual exegesis and correct interpretation of the text in their definitions. One other important aspect of preaching, according to the interviewees, was that preaching should be based on the Scripture.

Understandably, there are various definitions of preaching because it is a multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be defined in a simplistic way. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 3 of this study, Bonhoeffer (2002:32) differentiates between *kerussein and euaggelizein* (which refer to a *kerygmatic* dimension of preaching) on one hand, and on the other hand, *didaskein* (teaching), which has its function in the building up of an existing congregation, by instructing it in a previously unknown doctrine. Chapter 3 of this study referred to many other definitions and descriptions of preaching, which in a way, justifies the interviewees' diversified perspectives of this phenomenon. It can be said that all the interviewees had a fair understanding of what preaching entails.

*Second*, the interviewees knew the fundamental elements of preaching, as they mentioned, among others, the preacher, the audience and the Scripture. From the data above it can be seen that all five of them mentioned the Scriptures as important. This affirms Basden (1999:76-87), that Praise and Worship, also loosely referred to as Pentecostal Worship, has its main features as Scripture reading, offering and sermon. However, it seemed as if interviewees did not regard the sermon as being one of the fundamental elements of preaching.

*Third*, regarding the other roles of the preacher besides the proclamation of the word, three interviewees alluded to the personality of the preacher. They used phrases like being a people person, having integrity, being exemplary and having good conduct. One of them explained that when the preacher preaches, he/she also brings into the sermon his/her knowledge, experiences in reading God's word and a personal walk with God. This claim corroborates the view that a sermon is truth strained through

human personality and as such, it (personality) is inseparable from the preacher (Kurewa 2000:173).

In addition, what the interviewees said is in line with the characteristics of the preacher as a pastor. The pastoral image puts a spotlight on the personality of the preacher. In this view, character, experience, insight, sensitivity, professional skills and relationship with the congregation are all important in doing the pastoral task (Long 2005a:31-32; cf. Johnson 2015:33). This idea was stated by other interviewees who said that the preacher's heart and motive for preaching must be right, such that they do not promote themselves, but Christ. In conclusion, it can be said that pertaining to preaching, the interviewees viewed the preacher's personality as very important.

*Fourth*, regarding the role of the preacher in effectively engaging the congregation in preaching, it can be said that all interviewees had a fair grasp of what the preacher needs to do. Eye contact with the congregants was mentioned several times. In addition, asking questions and probing the audience by saying "Halleluyah!" or "Amen!" was regarded as one of the popular ways of engaging the congregation in Pentecostal preaching. What the interviewees said corroborated Kurewa (2000:139), that preaching should be participatory since it is a conversation between the pulpit and the congregation. The preacher must present himself or herself with the understanding that the congregation follows what he/she says, and the congregation responds in some way either by shouting "Halleluyah!" or "Amen!" or by nodding heads or clapping hands.

Furthermore, the issue of using simple language in engaging the congregation effectively, as mentioned by one interviewee, agrees with the assertion of Johnson (2014:69-74), that the preacher's language should not only make it possible for hearers to understand him/her, but it should also make it impossible for them to misunderstand him/her.

### **5.3.2 Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching**

#### **5.3.2.1 Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching: Analysis and presentation**

This section presents data on Pentecostalism and how it differs from other church traditions, characteristics of Pentecostal preaching, differences between Pentecostal

preaching and preaching in other church traditions, as well as effects of cultural contexts of the congregation on Pentecostal preaching.

### **Pentecostalism and how it differs from other church traditions**

Preacher E explained that Pentecostalism emphasises what the Holy Spirit does in a believer, such as spiritual empowerment and giving of spiritual gifts. He said: *“I would define Pentecostalism as ... an activity of the Holy Spirit. I would say, him empowering the saints, him providing gifts to the saints, him providing fruit to the saints and him also assisting the preacher in his preaching. Obviously, signs and wonders would follow because all that is the act of the Holy Spirit.”*

Preacher F described Pentecostalism as a religious tradition which was derived from the Book of Acts when the Holy Spirit came upon people who had gathered in the upper room. He explained that Pentecostal churches believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and also in the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, according to him, the main characteristic of Pentecostal churches is believing in the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, and the functioning of the Holy Spirit through the members of that particular church. Furthermore, Preacher F mentioned that the other difference between Pentecostalism and other traditions is that *“... the Pentecostal churches would be led by the person of the Holy Spirit [while] other churches would be led by their practices, their procedures, their traditions”*.

According to Preacher G Pentecostalism does not mean the Holy Spirit. He explained: *“We are called Pentecostals, though the word Pentecostal does not mean the Holy Spirit. It means the Feast of the First Fruits ...celebrated on the fiftieth day from the Feast of Passover. After Passover, on the fiftieth day, the Holy Spirit came, during the time when they were celebrating the Feast of the First Fruits, on the fiftieth day ... Now it [Pentecostalism] was named after the feast which was celebrated then, which was Pentecost.”* He explained further that the difference between Pentecostalism and other church traditions is based on areas of emphasis in preaching. He said: *“The Pentecostal churches have taken a certain line of preaching in the Bible... Now the Pentecostal churches ... stress the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the key to Pentecostals ... Now, we decided to choose to stress the Holy Spirit, healings, deliverance, salvation being the key, and we deny the issue of training [of pastors for*

*ministry]. He also mentioned: "... while other church traditions are highly involved in social issues involving the community, Pentecostals shy away from social and political involvement."*

Preacher H traced Pentecostalism to the Book of Acts Chapter 2, which he referred to, as the fulfilment of the Book of Joel Chapter 2. He then described it in this way: *"Then Pentecostalism ... should then be understood to be a movement, a tradition, or a belief that would have that personal experience with the Holy Spirit as the core. So, when you say Pentecostalism, my understanding is that there has to be that personal experience with the person and the deity of the Holy Spirit."*

Preacher J explained that *"Pentecostalism ... is the tradition that says man needs to have the new birth [through] repentance, and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and then thirdly, the speaking in tongues."* He explained that the difference between Pentecostalism and other church traditions is that *"... with Pentecostalism it's salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, but with the other traditions it's just a belief in one thing, salvation in the name of Jesus Christ and that is all."*

### **Characteristics of Pentecostal preaching**

Preacher E explained that one of the characteristics of Pentecostal preaching derives from Pentecostalism, in that it depends more on the work of the Holy Spirit, and it is linked to Christ as the Word of God. He went further to explain: *"... from where I am sitting, [it] means Pentecostal preaching will have a trend of relying more on the Holy Spirit, but at the same time having Christ at the centre and also understanding that Christ himself is the [incarnate] Word. Simply meaning that you cannot be Pentecostal outside the word and outside Christ."*

Preacher F mentioned that in Pentecostal preaching, the sermon is Holy Spirit-inspired. In his words, he said: *"... the Holy Spirit decides on what needs to be said and how it needs to be said, and how it needs to be conveyed to the people..."* He also mentioned that in the Pentecostal tradition, after preaching there should be results or the response to the preaching of the word of God.



Preacher G mentioned that Pentecostal preaching is characterised by an emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, healing, deliverance and salvation. He also mentioned that previously, Pentecostals did not believe that one should prepare a sermon in writing before preaching. If one did that, he/she was of the flesh and not moved by the Spirit.

Preacher H explained that Pentecostal preaching followed the characteristics of Pentecostalism that he had mentioned. He then described it in these words: *“Pentecostal preaching would then ... be a proclamation of the gospel where the preaching allows a greater amount of freedom for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So, ... it will not just be the actual preparation, whichever form the preparation takes, that one would have to follow verbatim ... but then there will be that allowance and that freedom for the expression of the Holy Spirit of the Lord. Then with that said, even the very manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, wherein as you minister there is the expression and utterance and manifestation of the very gifts of the Holy Spirit in whichever form, whether by healing, whether by exorcism, whether by word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and whatever really.”*

Preacher J characterised Pentecostal preaching as preaching with the aim of conviction and application. He said: *“In Pentecostalism, they believe in application of the sermon, that the sermon should be able to generate a response, whether the sermon was rebuking something, then there should be a response ...and also, another thing which is important in Pentecostal preaching is the evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe more in the evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

### **Differences between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church traditions**

Preacher F mentioned that while Pentecostal preaching follows the leading of the Holy Spirit, in other church traditions preaching follows what is written in the lectionary, such that *“ ...you would find that people follow a certain booklet that has been set by somebody else, that in a particular day or a particular Sunday, one would have to preach about this or teach about this in the church, in the view of getting all the churches to follow a certain pattern of preaching.”*

Preacher G stated that the difference between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church tradition is on the emphasis of passages of the Scripture. He said: *“Yeah, we differ in our stress [emphasis] in preaching from the pulpit. The Pentecostal churches they have taken a certain line of preaching in the Bible ... We have passages which we select at the expense of the others, and we stress on that ... The traditional churches have got also their own selection on the same book, where they pick up and stress those, at the expense of the others.”*

Preacher J made a distinction between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church traditions in that *“... other traditions preach social responsibility, social justice and generally... doing good and ...ubuntu and so on. That is where other traditions mainly focus on. Yeah, on the social aspect [whereas] we Pentecostals focus more on the spirit man, on his soul, then of course the social follows.”*

### **Effects of cultural contexts of the congregation on Pentecostal preaching**

Preacher E emphasised that the cultural context of the congregation is important to consider. This requires the preacher to know the people’s language, since it may impact the message being preached. Sometimes this cultural context may have negative effects on the congregation. Sometimes one may find that the congregation does not accept the preacher because he does not align himself/herself with some of their fundamental cultural practices.

Preacher F mentioned that in some instances, the cultural context of a congregation influences people not to be receptive to what the preacher preaches, particularly where the preacher disagrees with their culture. He gave an example of cultures which embrace ancestral beliefs, which in most cases do not agree with faith in one God. He said: *“You would find that because of their cultural background, people would then not want to be receptive of what is being preached, unless obviously when the Holy Spirit has then affected or captured their hearts that they would be able to receive the message being preached. Otherwise, whatever that is cultural that is not aligned with the word of God, you would find that people in general are not receptive of that preaching.”*

Preacher G focused more on what the preacher should do in different cultural contexts. He mentioned that the preacher should first know the cultures of the congregation

he/she is ministering to. Second, he has to be aware of those aspects of their culture, which are not in contradiction with the Bible teaching, which he does not have to oppose. Then, for those aspects of the culture that are not aligned with biblical teaching, he has to correct persuasively, but not compromising the truth of God's word.

Preacher H said that as a preacher one has to take into consideration the culture of the people one is preaching to, otherwise that could make a barrier to one's preaching. He said: *"When we minister to people, we minister to them having to understand that they are in a particular cultural setting and therefore, that culture is there to be understood. What type of people are they, ... before I minister, there must be a lot of work that is done before the actual ministry ... how they understand things, and that includes simple things like the dress, because if I dress in a particular way that is not appreciated according to their norms, then there is already a barrier created that could impede a smoothness of the delivery of the message that I am bringing across to them."*

Preacher J stated that cultural contexts have a way of creating biases, either from the preacher wanting the congregation to adhere to his/her cultural practices or the congregation elevating their culture above other cultures. He gave an example of a preacher who would want to change the dress code of the congregation to be aligned to his/hers. He said: *"Yeah, you will find [that] if I am a white man [and] I come here, of course, I will want people to dress like me, and if they are not dressed like me, then for me, I might have a problem that maybe they are not changed. ... that they have not repented."* He also stated that because of their cultures, some congregations, elect only men in their leadership positions.

### **5.3.2.2 Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching: Interpretation and discussion of the findings**

First, pertaining to the interviewees' understanding of Pentecostalism, all of them mentioned in one way or the other, that Pentecostalism is a religious tradition that emphasises the working of the Holy Spirit, including prophecy, healing and deliverance. Preaching about salvation was also mentioned as a major characteristic of Pentecostalism. This agrees with Kgatle (2017:4) that the major doctrinal characteristics of Pentecostalism are justification by faith, sanctification by grace, the

baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues, divine healing and the personal pre-millennial rapture of the saints at the second coming of Christ.

Furthermore, two interviewees mentioned that Pentecostal churches do not involve themselves in community issues. That is, spiritual aspects of people take pre-eminence over social and political aspects of life. This gives credence to what is stated by Kaunda (2015:119-120), that the dualistic ontology of the Pentecostal worldview makes a sharp dichotomy between the present reality and the spiritual reality. This results in Pentecostals being averse to most forms of involvement in social activities, except when it is motivated by an underlying desire to convert unbelievers to Pentecostalism. However, no interviewee described Pentecostalism in terms of its broad categories such as Classical Pentecostal churches, Charismatics and Neo-Charismatics. In addition, no mention was made of African Pentecostalism.

According to all the interviewees, a noteworthy difference between Pentecostalism and other church traditions is the working of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal worship.

Second, all interviewees mentioned in various ways, that Pentecostal preaching is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Interviewees explained that the Holy Spirit inspires and guides the preacher. In addition, the Holy Spirit manifests in the operation of gifts such as prophecy, word of knowledge, healing, word of wisdom and working of miracles. From this, it is clear that the working of the Holy Spirit is regarded as an important characteristic of Pentecostal worship in general, and Pentecostal preaching in particular. This agrees with Ma & Ma (2010:154), who mention that the baptism in the Spirit best characterises Pentecostals, and this is frequently reflected in their preaching, in the sense that at the end of many sermons, congregants are admonished to seek this experience.

Interviewees mentioned that the characteristics of Pentecostal preaching derived from those of Pentecostalism. Pentecostal preaching differs from preaching in other religious traditions in that while other traditions follow the strict liturgical order written down in lectionaries, it depends on the leading of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit was to be expected because according to Nel (2017:286), Pentecostal preaching emphasises two important elements, namely, the value of the written word, and the Spirit's work in the preacher and the midst of the congregation. It is in the

interplay and balance of these two elements that Pentecostal preaching takes place. In this sense, it is the active involvement of God through the Spirit in preaching, that distinguishes it from mere speech. Nel (2017:289) goes on to say that the power of the Holy Spirit enables the preacher to preach with evidence of supernatural results.

Third, it was mentioned that, unlike other religious traditions, Pentecostal preachers want to see results, by having an altar call after their preaching, they want to make sure that people respond to the message from God through the sermon. Ma & Ma (2010:155-156) allude to this, that an essential part of Pentecostal preaching is the altar service, which provides an opportunity for the audience to respond to the message. In these cases, the congregation is invited to the altar area for, among others, salvation, healing, commitment/dedication, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, praying over life's problems, blessing, business, children and marriage life.

Fourth, all interviewees mentioned that cultural contexts affect preaching, in one way or another. This included the language, the dress code and respect of the congregation's norms and values, by the preacher. According to Kim (2017: 3-4), dealing with people of different cultures necessitates the need for cultural intelligence on the part of the preacher. Cultural intelligence is the capability to deal effectively with other people with whom one does not share a common cultural background and understanding. In addition, cultural intelligence is a requirement, if preaching is to be seen as a bridge-building exercise between the world of the Bible and the world of the twenty-first century.

### **5.3.3 Christology**

This section responds to the research question: *How, and to what extent does Christology find expression in the preaching of Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region?*

#### **5.3.3.1 Christology: Presentation and analysis**

Entailed in this discussion are the views of the interviewees about their understanding of the concept of Christology, the importance and expression of Christology in preaching, as well as Christology and Pneumatology.

## Understanding the concept of Christology

While Preacher E expressed Christology, simply as the study of Christ, he explained further that Christology involves allowing Christ to be at the centre of all the church's practices, including preaching.

Preacher F defined Christology as the study of Christ and that Christ should be the central theme of everything that is done in a particular congregation. He mentioned that Christology is important in Pentecostal preaching because Christ is part of the Trinity of the Godhead. He said: *"Remember from the Godhead, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, there is a relationship between the three. So, Christology or Christ being the centre would work hand in hand with the Holy Spirit in providing or directing or guiding the church in a particular direction ... therefore, the Holy Spirit would be pointing people or the preacher towards the central figure, who is Christ."*

Preacher G defined Christology as: *"Christ incarnated, which means it's Christ made flesh ... That means Christology should affect all spheres of life ... According to God life is a house to stay in, means of transport (car), land to plough, water, life means land, life means good provision, that I should not suffer. I should have provision and good governance and good rulers who rule according to the will of God. So, this means there is nothing in this world which God cannot be involved in. Hence Christology should affect all spheres of life."*

Regarding his understanding of the concept of Christology, Preacher H said: *"I think Christology is that branch of Christian theology relating to the person, nature and role of Christ. In other words, whatever that Christ was, whatever that Christ did ... we mean his being incarnate God, him also being human and him born, dying, buried, rising, ascending ... so, in other words, all aspects of Christ. In a nutshell it is the study of Christ."*

Preacher J understood Christology as the study of the person of Jesus Christ and his earthly ministry. He said: *"Pentecostals believe that Jesus was human but also divine ... We are studying the deity of Jesus Christ, his nature and his ministry."*

## Importance of Christology and its expression in preaching

Preacher E regarded Christology to be very important in Pentecostalism. He gave this reason: “... *because Christ is the head of the Church. Christ is the baptiser in the Holy Spirit. He has to be at the centre ... So, if you have Christ at the centre of things you have God at the centre of things [and] if you have God at the centre of things and Christ the centre of things, [then] you have the Holy Spirit at the centre of things. So, I think it’s quite critical that we have Christ taking the major role, you know, in preaching and in everything.*”

Concerning the expression of Christology in the Western Reef Region, Preacher E was frank to say he does not think it finds sufficient expression in preaching. He said: “*I don’t think so, honestly speaking. I don’t think so. In ... Western Reef, I don’t think Christology actually got attention. What you would find would be emphasis on the Holy Spirit, emphasis on the Old Testament, more than the New. You would find us, ... instead being driven by what the audience pushes you to say, instead of what is it that you want to say.*”

Preacher F’s view about the expression of Christology in the Western Reef Region, was that there were instances when Christology finds expression in their preaching, while in some instances its expression is lacking. In his response to the researcher’s question, He said: “*Ok, yes and no. Yes, when one is solely dependent on the Holy Spirit. Yes, when one is being sent by God. Yes, when the motive of the preacher is right. Obviously, we live in times when people have ulterior motives ... You would find that they would then suffocate Christology from their preaching, and they start pointing people towards either themselves or towards whatever that they would expect the people to do. So, it’s rather unfortunate, it is true that depending on the one who is being sent or the preacher himself if they are in line with the will of God, yes Christology would be part of their theme, but if people, their hearts are not in the right place and if they have ulterior motives, obviously they will suffocate Christ in their preaching.*”

Preacher G’s view was that Christology does not find sufficient expression in Pentecostal preaching. He said: “*Christology in the Pentecostal church is not effectively expressed. Why? The majority of our pastors are not trained. The majority of our ministers are not trained. Therefore, to express Christology from their preaching*



*... becomes impossible. Let alone the issue that they stress life in Christ, salvation, but [in] some certain preachings you find that someone reads a passage, [then] he leaves that passage and bring his own personal crafted story to the passage which he read ... That is where Christology is not expressed accordingly, because of the failure of going back to those three things, (hermeneutics, homiletics and apologetics). So, Christology in Pentecostals is not expressed the way it ought to be.” [The] reason being, the majority of our ministers are taken from the pool of elders and deacons. From there, straight to the pulpit, to all over the world. No training, nothing.”*

Preacher H was extensive in his explanation of Christology in Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching. He referred to the practices of some Charismatic churches in South Africa, where people were made to eat the grass, and drink petrol. He said that according to his observation, one characteristic of preaching in these churches is the lack of preaching about Christ. He said: *“That [the investigation of the CRL Commission] made me take a bit of time to study a bit of the personalities behind the practices. And I followed a bit of them in terms of preaching, how they approach preaching, what is key to their ministries and messages. What I picked up was that there wasn’t much of Christ in the preaching of the messages ... For me the challenge there is, when we divorce the preaching from Christ or Christ from the preaching, we are therefore saying the source of what we are doing has nothing to do with Christ. And the central message has nothing to do with Christ. The core of our preaching has nothing to do with Christ ... It seems to be dangerous because when we talk the gospel, Christ is and should be at the centre.”*

According to Preacher H, in the Western Reef Region, Christology finds expression only in times when soul-winning campaigns are conducted. However, since this is not done consistently and on daily basis in preaching, he would also say there is not sufficient expression of Christology in this region.

Preacher J conceded that Christology does not find sufficient expression in the Western Reef Region. He emphasised that the reason is the lack of training of pastors. Responding to the researcher’s question in this regard he said: *“Unfortunately, not. They [life and ministry of Christ] don’t find sufficient expression in our preaching, and I want to move on to then say why? The downfall with Pentecostalism was that the preachers of Pentecostalism depended more on inspiration of the Holy Spirit than*

*being trained. So, now lack of training affects more on what we say about Christ, on the pulpit.”* He also alluded to preaching on materialism as another factor that hinders sufficient expression of Christology in Pentecostal preaching.

### **Christology and Pneumatology**

Preacher E related Christology to Pneumatology in the sense that Jesus Christ is the baptiser in the Holy Spirit. Preacher F believed that there is a relationship between Christology and Pneumatology and explained his view by saying: “... *when Christ ascended to heaven, he had left a promise, and he said he will send the Comforter, the Helper, the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. And he even mentioned that the Holy Spirit will remind and teach the believers, ... Remember that Christ started, and the work that he had started needs to continue. And without the empowering of the Holy Spirit, that work will not be able to continue. So therefore, the Holy Spirit gives the power to the believers for them to be able to continue.*”

Preacher G explained the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology by reference to the existence of the Trinity of God from creation. He also explained that before Jesus died, he said to his disciples that he was not going to leave them alone, but he would send them the Holy Spirit who would teach them what he had said. He explained: “*And he [Jesus] said when I leave, I am not going to leave you desolate, or orphans or alone. I am going to leave you with the Holy Spirit, who will tell you all that I have said. He will take what is from me. So, we can see that the Holy Spirit here is like a messenger and without him ... there is no life. You preach a meaningful message which can inject the audience, by the Holy Spirit ... when you are under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.*”

For Preacher H, Christology and Pneumatology are inseparable, since it is Jesus who promised his disciples the coming of the Holy Spirit according to the book of John. He said: “... *it is Jesus who said I will ask the Father to send you the promise. It is Jesus Christ in Chapters 14,15 and 16 of the Book of John who spent some good time speaking about the very Holy Spirit. It is Jesus who in Acts 1:8 said to the disciples go wait in Jerusalem. And he told them what they are [would be] waiting for. So, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are inseparable. ... So, the other thing, Jesus would say the Holy Spirit would talk about him and glorify him as he glorified the Father. We cannot do*

*preaching ... and we divorce the Christology or the Christ-focused approach or we divorce to have Christ at the centre of the message. I see those two to be inseparable, as Siamese twins.”*

Preacher J explained the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology by saying: *“They relate ... the New Testament is about two people [persons of the Trinity], the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also, the fulfilment of the Old Testament, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Now, ... Jesus says I am leaving, but as I leave, I will speak to the Father to give you his promise and that promise is the Holy Spirit. And Jesus says, when the Holy Spirit has come, he will not speak of his own, but he will remind you of everything that I have taught you, everything that I have said to you.”* He explained further by saying: *“Jesus would not have been born or incarnated without the Holy Spirit. So, the Bible says when the angel came to the virgin Mary, he said the Holy Spirit will overshadow you, and that which you are going to have, it will be of the Holy Spirit. So, there is that relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit.”*

### **5.3.3.2 Christology: Interpretation and discussion of the findings**

In general, interviewees showed an understanding of Christology as the study of the person and ministry of Jesus, although not much detail was given. Only one interviewee mentioned that Christology concerns the divinity and humanity of Christ. Interviewees did not mention anything about the debate concerning how the Jesus of history became the Messiah. Neither was there any interviewee who mentioned concepts such as Christology from above or from below, High or Low Christology, or Classical Pentecostal Christology? Emphasis was on what Jesus did in his ministry and what he can do in a person's life. This view can be classified as the historical perspective of Christology, which puts more emphasis on the historicity of Jesus as well as his redemptive work (Gathogo 2015:2).

Besides the description of Christology as the study of the life and ministry of Jesus as the Messiah, almost all interviewees linked Christology to the centrality of Jesus in all the affairs of the church. In this sense, they viewed Christology as an important aspect of Pentecostal worship. According to some interviewees, this Christocentrism in preaching will help preachers not to exalt themselves at the expense of Christ and end up pursuing their agendas in the church. This view of the centrality of Jesus Christ agrees with Kärkkäinen (2013:207-208), that at the heart of Pentecostal spirituality, is

not a pneumato-centrism, but rather a Christocentrism in which Jesus is perceived in five interrelated roles: Saviour, Sanctifier, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, Healer and Soon-coming Eschatological King.

Regarding the expression of Christology in preaching, two of the five interviewees mentioned that Jesus Christ is preached, especially in evangelistic campaigns. They also mentioned that this is not the case in normal weekly services since evangelistic campaigns come once in a while. Three of the interviewees stated categorically that Christology does not have sufficient expressions in the sermons of the Western Reef Region. One of them mentioned preaching on materialism as another factor that hinders sufficient expression of Christology. Furthermore, another interviewee lamented the preaching of sermons which rally congregants around the preacher instead of around Jesus himself, as another factor affecting sufficient expression of Christology.

All interviewees agreed that there is a relationship between Christology and Pneumatology. The interviewees, in one way or another, attributed this to the relationship of the three persons of the Trinity of the Godhead. One of the interviewees illustrated the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology by saying that when we pray, we pray to God the Father, in the name of Jesus, but praying through the Spirit. In addition, four of the five interviewees mentioned that before Jesus was crucified, he explicitly told the disciples that he would speak to God the Father to send them the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all things, according to John 16:7-15. In this sense, one of the interviewees said the Holy Spirit is like a messenger. In essence, the interviewees agree with House (2006: 44-45), who states that a genuinely Pentecostal Christology has a strong pneumatic inclination that acknowledges the perichoresis of the Trinity, in its preaching of the full gospel.

#### **5.3.4 State of preaching in churches of the Western Reef Region**

This section seeks to answer the research question: *What is the current state of preaching in the Western Reef Region?*

#### 5.3.4.1 State of preaching in churches of the Western Reef Region: Analysis and presentation of data

The following subthemes are discussed hereunder: The present state of preaching in the Western Reef Region, as well as factors affecting preaching in the region.

##### **The present state of preaching in the Western Reef Region**

According to Preacher E, the state of preaching in the Western Reef Region was not entirely satisfactory. He said: *“I would say there is therefore a lot of improvement that needs to be done ... Something that will ensure that we up the game a little bit, in our preaching, [and] in our doing whatever that God has actually called us to do.”*

According to Preacher F, the state of preaching in the Western Reef Region has its positives and negatives. He finds that in most cases preaching maintains Christocentricity. However, he said: *“But there is also the other side, where people in the name of being relevant suffocate Christology in their preaching. Because obviously, ... wanting to be relevant, they would then want to be dependent on research, ultimately getting the Scripture to say what they want to address, other than having the Scripture to speak by itself.”*

Preacher H did not explicitly say the level of preaching was unsatisfactory, but he mentioned that it has been affected by how the electronic media usually presents it, as glamour and miracles rather than teaching. He said: *“... you know when you watch your media ... the media that most of us have been exposed to would then put forth a glamour in a particular type of expression of the message, which would just be miracles, signs and wonders. I mean most messages if they are to be crafted, packaged for TV for example, those who package them would always make sure that there isn't much time spent on the teaching. If there are miracles there, much time would be spent on miracles, such that it then gets to sway most of the church and the leaders to what looks or is presented as glamour.”*

Preacher J stated that the level of preaching in the Western Reef Region is not where it is expected to be. He attributed this to the lack of training of pastors in these words: *“... my observation will be [that] the level [of preaching] is not up there until we encourage the Pentecostals to take seriously the issue of training.”*

## Factors affecting preaching in the Western Reef

In this section, the focus is on this research question: *What are the factors affecting preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region?*

Preacher F alluded to prayerlessness as one of the factors affecting preaching in their region. He said: *“Oh well, one would be prayerlessness. Obviously, when you do not spend enough time in prayer, you won’t be able to receive from the person of the Holy Spirit. Number two, Lack of spending sufficient time in reading the word of God for yourself, other than reading the word of God for preaching.”*

Preacher H dealt much with the cause of the present state of preaching in the Western Reef Region as the lack of theological training of pastors and the rarity of emphasis thereof for people coming into the ministry. He stated: *“Now ... in our case, we are ... can I be rough and say we don’t care? Because we don’t say don’t train, but we don’t say you will not be accepted or admitted into the ministry if you are not trained. So, in that sense, I say we don’t care. However [in whatever way] you come [a prospective pastor comes], it’s fine. So, I think the middle line is key here, wherein we need to understand the role that training plays. I mean we are dealing with people here. There are some basic fundamental things about people, about cultures, about this and that, that have to be understood, and unless we train or are trained, we may miss those things. For example, we are in the fourth industrial revolution now, ... And as the church, especially my church now, we don’t seem to be caring about that.”*

Preacher J noted one of the reasons for the current state of preaching as the appointment of erstwhile deacons and elders in local churches as ministers without formal theological training. He said: *“... because with Pentecostals, you find that I [one] was an elder here in this local church. Maybe I get the calling of God... but then I leave my church [and] I start ... just out of me being... an elder last week or last month, then today I am a pastor, I am leading my own flock. All those kinds of things without having been trained.”*



### 5.3.4.2 State of Preaching in the Western Reef Region: Interpretation and discussion of the findings

Of the five interviewees, only one regarded preaching in the region to be at an acceptable level, depending on the motive of the preacher. However, the other four interviewees had a common view that preaching was not at the level where it is expected to be. One of them said they needed to up their game.

The common reason given by these interviewees was the lack of theological training for pastors. One of the concerns raised was that an untrained pastor who came into the ministry from being an elder or deacon in the church, will not be able to deal with exegetical and hermeneutical issues of preaching, as well as the related Christological aspects. These views echo the sentiments of Kgatle & Mofokeng (2019:2), that Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit can draw to their attention relevant Scriptural passages that will help them deal with contextual challenges in their lives. Hence, the perception by some of them that theological training is not necessary.

One of the interviewees went further to say that not only are ministers not trained before starting the ministry but there is also no emphasis by the church on pre-ministerial training, when compared to other churches. Prospective pastors are accepted into the ministry based on their calling. For this reason, the interviewee felt that the church does not take the issue of pre-ministerial theological training of pastors seriously.

Peter Watt, dealing with the history of the Assemblies of God in Southern Africa, commented that in the Assemblies of God, Bible schools were not regarded highly and that no value was placed on academic education for ministers (Watt 1992:43-44, cf. Brodie 2011: 50). Pentecostals have sometimes characterised theological education as being no more than a dead intellectualism (Anderson 2004:244, cf. Brodie 2011:50). However, according to Jacobsen (2006:5, cf. Brodie 2011:50), early Pentecostals were not so much opposed to theology *per se*, as to the use of theological terminology without the appropriate religious experience to support the terminology.

However, in later years, there was a period in South African Pentecostalism, in which theological training for pastors was becoming increasingly acceptable. For instance,



John Bond of the Assemblies of God completed a Bachelor of Arts in Theology at the University of South Africa (cf. Brodie 2011:52). In so doing, he took a courageous stand against the anti-education stance that typified the South African Assemblies of God of the time. In addition, Nicholas Bhengu, the founder of the AOG (BTG) attended the South African General Mission Bible School at Dumisa (later known as the Union Bible Institute, Sweetwaters), from 1934 to 1936 (cf. Brodie 2011:58). This shows that from the early years of Pentecostalism, theological training was perceived differently.

Another factor that was mentioned is that since ministers who are trained do not come from the same institution, there is no uniformity in the approach to certain aspects of God's word. This has a bearing on the church's doctrine. However, recently the AOG (BTG) has introduced a policy that its probationary ministers have to attend a compulsory course that deals with basic ministerial issues expected of them.

Furthermore, the other factors that affect preaching are prayerlessness and lack of spending sufficient time in reading the word of God for oneself, instead of reading the word of God for preaching.

### **5.3.5 Improving preaching in the Western Reef Region**

In this section, the research question being addressed is: *How could preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region be improved?*

#### **5.3.5.1 Improving preaching in the Western Reef Region: Analysis of data**

Preacher E was emphatic in that training of ministers was required, if the situation regarding preaching was to improve in the Western Reef Region. He said: *"The fact that most of our preachers don't even have a single piece of education, in terms of ... Scriptures, where there is no emphasis of saying now that you have a calling you must then develop yourself. It's only through development, it's only through education, it's only through knowledge, ... So, I am just trying to say here ignorance about Scriptures, ignorance about Christ himself, in other words, you being taught instead of you just reading the Bible, for me that's what actually, I think, is the predicament ..."*

Preacher F stated that to improve the state of preaching in the region, there should be continuous training or seminars for preachers. He said: *"... for a lack of a better term, continuous impartation or training or seminars for that matter for preachers, that should*

*be conducted from a regional level, obviously by the regional leaders and encouragement by those who are leaders in the region and reminding the preachers what our core business is.”*

The other observation that Preacher F made was that pastors were from different generations, and also may have studied in different institutions. This may lead to differences in approaches to some church doctrines. Hence the need for a common approach to training. In addition, he advocated that besides regional training, individual preachers should be practitioners who “... *have the heart to want to learn more ... the heart to want to equip themselves more, without having dependence from the regional leadership.*”

Like Preacher F, Preacher G indicated that for the region to improve preaching, there has to be the training of pastors before they get into ministry, and for those who are already in ministry, there should be ongoing training. He said, “*I was talking of the issue that unless we train our pastors seriously in such a way that training should be a compulsory thing when you get to the ministry...Either we get some money to sponsor them, but they have to be trained. Without training... there will be no improvement. The number one thing is to train our pastors. Now those who are inside [already in the ministry] now, there should be in-service [training] as they do [with] teachers at the Department of Education...*”

Preacher H did not doubt that the training of ministers would be important in improving preaching in the Western Reef Region. He compared the lack of training of ministers in the AOG (BTG) with other churches when he said: “... *Mr Lawrence, [referring to the researcher] I am happy that you know where we are coming from as ... our church because it is different in other churches. For example, I did my elementary theological training with Rhema [Church], and I realised that with Rhema it’s definite, you cannot be expected to lead unless you have been trained. There isn’t any doubt, [He repeats]. It’s as clear as the sun rises from the East ... There is no ambiguity, it’s clear. You have got to be trained to discharge your duties at that level as a leader, including just heading a department. Not just a pastor, including heading a counselling department or any department [in the church] for that matter.*”

Furthermore, Preacher H thought one way of improving preaching would be the way in which the church would go about encouraging ministers to be trained. He said: *“Then with that said, it could then be ... how you rekindle the desire for the people to be trained, ... how do you get it done... Yeah, advertising, bringing somebody ... who is advanced in as far as the training is concerned, the education, the understanding, and yet well-grounded scripturally, spiritually, ... and you say look at this [person], look at this. Because I think the other thing is the references we keeping ... but if you can bring other references to say look at so and so, in our case look at Baba Bhengu, the man was both trained and he was grounded spiritually and scripturally.”*

Preacher J followed up on what he had said about the lack of training of pastors by adding that pastors have to attend while in ministry. He said: *“I think maybe this is also closer to training but think at least workshops ... where we call pastors or preachers and we workshop them... Workshops have the advantage of being direct, going straight to [what the pastor is supposed to do]. So, I will think workshops for me, are the things that will help ... in improving the level of preaching.”*

### **5.3.5.2 Improving preaching in the Western Reef Region: Interpretation and discussion of the findings**

All interviewees agreed that to turn the situation around, there should be deliberate efforts to train pastors before they start their ministry. This should not only come as a requirement by the church, but it should also emanate from individual pastors having a desire to learn. While the situation regarding theological training is receiving attention in Pentecostal circles, it can be said that from the interviewees’ perspective, the Western Reef Region is still lacking behind. The outcry about lack of theological training corroborates the view by Kgatle & Mofokeng (2019:2) that Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit, who did great works in the life of Christ, as well as other powerful works by the Apostles, lives in them. Hence, many Pentecostal preachers do not even see a need to go through theological training because the Holy Spirit is the revelatory agent between the Bible and its reader.

In addition, the interviewees mentioned that for those who are already in the ministry, there should be workshops and in-service training by regional officials, just as the Department of Education does with its teachers. This issue appeared to be a matter of urgency and great concern among the interviewees, such that one of them

mentioned that if it is possible, the church should find financial resources to ensure that pastors are trained for ministry.

In addition, there was a view that the church should find those pastors who are trained and eager in theological education, to be presented as role models for prospective pastors. This will encourage the untrained pastors to pursue theological training. For instance, the church could refer to, among others, John Bond who completed a Bachelor of Arts in Theology at the Unisa (cf. Brodie 2011:52) and Nicholas Bhengu, the founder of the AOG (BTG), who attended the South African General Mission Bible School at Dumisa (cf. Brodie 2011:58).

#### **5.4 REVIEW OF THE APPROPRIATENESS OF RICHARD OSMER'S FOUR CORE TASKS OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION**

This study had its framework as Richard Osmer's four core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation. These four core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation are considered relevant in the sense that they framed the study appropriately. As stated in Chapter 1, the advantage of using Osmer's approach is that it bridges the sub-disciplines of academy and ministry, and the interpretation of the interconnectedness of ministry (Pieterse 2017:38). In addition, the empirical work was guided by the aim of the study, which is to explore Pentecostal preaching, together with its inherent characteristic of Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region of the AOG (BTG). This aim is further clarified in the objectives as included in the discussions below.

##### **5.4.1 The Descriptive Empirical Task of Practical Theological Interpretation**

As stated in Chapter 1, the Descriptive Empirical Task (What is going on?), involves gathering information that helps in discerning patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations and contexts (Osmer 2008:4-6). In order to be able to know what is going on, it might be necessary to conduct a research for various reasons such as to evaluate programmes or plan new ones; to deepen understanding of a crisis in the life of a church or community or to develop a better understanding of the culture of the congregation. To do this, there may be a need to design research projects consisting of the following fundamental elements of research design: The purpose of the project (which entails the specific reasons for carrying out the research), the strategy of inquiry

(the particular methodology guiding the research project), the research plan (how the project will be carried out in a specific time frame, who will conduct the research, who will be investigated and methods of gathering data, for instance, interviews, focus groups, or participant observation), and reflexivity (reflection on the meta-theoretical assumptions informing the project (Osmer 2008:47-58)).

The abovementioned steps were adopted in this research as follows: The purpose of this study is in Section 1.4; the strategy of inquiry (in Section 1.9.); the research plan (Section 1.9.2) and reflexivity (Section 1.8.2). The Descriptive Empirical Task is linked with the research objective of analysing the fundamental components of preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region. This study found that the semi-structured interviews were helpful in this regard. The interviewees' responses shed light regarding their understanding of Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching as they experienced them. They expressed their understanding of preaching and its fundamental components as, *inter alia*, the preacher, the congregation and the Scripture, but did not mention much about the sermon. It can be said that in this regard, the Descriptive Empirical Task, was helpful in this research.

However, concerning sermons which were analysed, this study concludes that since only two sermons were observed live, while the other eight were from social media platforms, not all aspects of preaching were observed. For instance, in some pre-recorded sermons, especially those from WhatsApp, congregational participation could not be observed. For this reason, this study believes that the Descriptive Empirical Task was partially helpful.

In addition, the Descriptive Empirical Task of Osmer's Practical Theological Interpretation guided this study in the objective of exploring how, and to what extent Christology is expressed in the Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region. In this regard, this study showed that in the ten sermons, six were explicitly about who Jesus was and what he did. Three of the sermons referred to Jesus to a lesser extent. These sermons dealt with what the church was supposed to do (according to Jesus's instruction in the Great Commission), and the power of the Holy Spirit (which was referred to, in the sermon on the River of God). In the latter sermon, Jesus was mentioned through reference to his speech in the synagogue as stated in Luke 4:18-19. Furthermore, the sermon on Men ought always to pray, flowed from Jesus's words

in Luke 18:1. Only one sermon, which was about the importance of God's word, did not mention much about Jesus.

From the semi-structured interviews, the interviewees were able to express their understanding of the concept of Christology, as well as the extent to which they felt Christology manifested itself in preaching, in the Western Reef Region. In this sense then, the Descriptive Empirical Task helped describe the situation, and consequently the achievement of the above-mentioned objective.

#### **5.4.2 The Interpretive Task of Practical Theological Interpretation**

This task assisted the research to better understand and explain why certain patterns and dynamics are happening in particular situations and contexts (Osmer 2008:4), regarding Pentecostal preaching. Furthermore, in this task there is a need for sagely wisdom (wise judgement, prudence or practical wisdom) to interpret episodes, situations and contexts by recognizing the relevant particulars of specific events and circumstances, discerning the moral ends at stake, and determining the most effective means to achieve these ends (Osmer 2008:84).

This task, was applied in conjunction with the research objective of finding the factors affecting the preaching in the Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region. The achievement of this objective could not be established through observation of sermons, either live or recorded. However, the semi-structured interviews shed light in this regard. The two main reasons why preaching was in its current state were lack of training for ministers, as well as the cultural contexts of the congregation. The other reasons were said to be the preacher's motive in preaching as well as his/her devotion to prayer and reading God's word.

#### **5.4.3 The Normative Task of Practical Theological Interpretation**

This task was used to address the objective of exploring the current practice of preaching in the Western Reef Region. In the Normative Task of Practical Theological Interpretation, theological concepts are used to interpret particular episodes (Osmer 2008:4). Accordingly, this study compared the current practice of preaching with other Pentecostal churches, from the perspective of the interviewees, as well as from the views of scholars as seen in the literature. Two of the interviewees mentioned that in

some church traditions, including some Pentecostal churches, theological training is not only required for ministers, but also for anyone who leads in church departments such as Sunday school or youth. Almost all interviewees felt that the AOG (BTG) lagged behind in this regard.

From a literature point of view, Brodie (2011:47-48) alludes to the dilemma as to whether Pentecostals, particularly those in the pastoral or evangelistic ministry, need formal theological training, or whether the anointing of the Spirit is sufficient. While this issue was settled in some countries many years ago, including South Africa, the issue is still current in some Pentecostal churches, including the AOG (BTG). There are many reasons for this. For example, prominent Pentecostal leaders such as the British evangelist, Stephen Jeffreys, had no theological training. In addition, in early British Pentecostalism, personal consecration was generally considered to be all that was required for both discipleship and leadership.

From what the interviewees said, it can be said that the situation described above, somehow, persists in the AOG (BTG). However, this situation cannot be said to be ideal, because non-training of ministers has shown to have various disadvantages such as:

- The minister's limited repertoire of subject material for their preaching and teaching, resulted in some congregations diminishing in size as confidence in the minister's grasp of biblical and theological issues waned (Watt 1992:119; cf. Brodie 2011:57).
- The lack of theological expertise of the ministers and their congregants led to setbacks as a result of challenges from the Word of Faith groups such as Rhema Bible Church (Brodie 2011:57).

It can therefore be concluded that Richard Osmer's Normative Task of Practical Theological Interpretation was appropriate and helpful in the achievement of this objective.



#### **5.4.4 The Pragmatic Task of Practical Theological Interpretation**

This study considered this task in conjunction with the research objective of suggesting ways of improving preaching in Pentecostal churches of the Western Reef Region. From the interviewees' responses, it was clear that to address the root cause of the current state of preaching, ministers have to be taken through theological training before they are appointed to churches. In addition, the church must be clear, deliberate and intentional with regard to prescribing pre-ministerial theological training as the norm for acceptance into the ministry.

The form of improvement alluded to above, relates to models of leading change. In this regard, reference can be made to Osmer's (2008:176-179) three types of leadership, namely, task competence, transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Task competence refers to the ability to excel in performing leadership roles in an organisation. Transactional leadership is the ability to influence others through trade-offs, reciprocity and mutual exchange. Transforming leadership is the process of leading an organisation through "deep change" in its identity, mission, culture and operating procedures.

This study views transforming leadership as the most appropriate to effect the change needed regarding theological training in the Western Reef Region of the AOG (BTG). However, transforming leadership is costly and risky since it encounters resistance, conflicts, failures and disappointments. In addition, since transforming leadership is discontinuous with the past, it requires a willingness from the leadership to confront a dominant coalition, that wields great power in defining the "organisational reality" and resists the possibility of doing things differently. The researcher, as a member of the AOG (BTG), believes that this form of leadership is needed at the regional and national levels of the church. The positive changes that would happen at the national level would be cascaded to different local churches and thus become systemic to the whole church. Therefore, Richard Osmer's Pragmatic task of Practical Theological Interpretation was helpful in this regard.

Based on the discussion above, this study, through the help of Richard Osmer's four core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation, was able to address and achieve its objectives as set out in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.4.2.

## 5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented and analysed empirical data from ten sermons and five interviews with preachers. The presentation was done through a thick description narrative and verbatim quotations from the participants. Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data from sermons were done separately from that of semi-structured interviews with preachers. Presentation and analysis were done through the Atlas.ti computer software. In the sermons, categories were developed from codes. For the interviews, the thematic structure of the interview schedule was the basis of the presentation of data.

Concerning interpretation and discussion of the findings from semi-structured interviews, reference was made to the research questions and other themes from the research. In addition, the researcher reviewed the appropriateness and relevance of the theoretical framework adopted in this study (that is, Richard Osmer's four tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation). This was done by also taking into consideration the objectives of the study.

In the next chapter, which is the last, the researcher summarises the study by giving a brief summary of each major finding, before a conclusion is made. Furthermore, recommendations for further research will be made. An addition, the limitations of the study are stated, as well as implications for future research.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature shows that there has been wide research about preaching in various settings and times, as shown in Chapter 3 of this study. However, not much has been written about preaching, as well as its Christological aspects, in the Pentecostal churches of the AOG (BTG). Therefore, this study wants to contribute to research in this regard.

This chapter covers several aspects: The first part entails comments on how the study covered and achieved its objectives. The second part reviews the appropriateness and helpfulness of Osmer's four core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation, which form the theoretical framework of the study.

The third part summarises each major finding of the research, concluding by comparing the findings of the research with the literature. This will show the areas where the findings of the study either confirm or differ from the literature.

The last section of this chapter entails the recommendations of the study, implications for future research, limitations of the study, as well as the summary.

#### 6.2 SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

This section gives summaries and conclusions for each major theme of the study.

##### 6.2.1 Pentecostalism and other church traditions

All interviewees, in one way or another, stated that Pentecostalism is a church tradition that has much to do with the working of the Holy Spirit. This work of the Holy Spirit manifested in speaking in tongues, prophecies, healing, deliverance and other gifts of the Holy Spirit. In addition, interviewees mentioned that the Holy Spirit inspires preaching, and is therefore indispensable in the preaching event. According to the interviewees, the major differences between Pentecostalism and other church traditions followed from its character of dependence on the Holy Spirit, which

manifests in their active and joyous worship services. It can be concluded that the interviewees understood what Pentecostalism entailed.

### **6.2.2 Understanding the notion of preaching**

This study can conclude that the interviewees understood what preaching entails. This was shown by what they said about preaching as communicating the gospel or proclamation of the word of God to an audience. They also added that it is done with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Regarding the fundamental elements of preaching, the interviewees mentioned the Scripture, the congregation, and the preacher, as well as some aspects necessary for effective preaching such as prayer and reading the word of God. The fact that not many of them mentioned the sermon and various types thereof, suggested that they did not make much distinction between preaching and the sermon.

About other roles of the preacher in preaching besides proclamation, the interviewees stated that the preacher must be a people person, have integrity and be trustworthy as a community leader.

The interviewees also stated that the role of the preacher in effectively engaging the congregation in preaching included the use of eye contact and asking questions to determine if the congregation still followed what he/she was saying. Only one of them mentioned that while questions are important in engaging the congregation in preaching, in the past it was not common because it was only the preacher who had the Bible.

In conclusion, it can be said that the interviewees understood the concept of preaching, together with its related aspects, fairly well.

### **6.2.3 Differences between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church traditions**

All interviewees stated in one way or another that Pentecostal preaching can be distinguished from preaching in other religious traditions in that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. However, this study cannot take this assertion as conclusive because no comparative study was done in this regard, to validate this claim. In addition, it was

highlighted that in some church denominations, preaching is done according to lectionaries. Furthermore, it was said that Pentecostal preaching is results-oriented in that at the end of preaching, an altar call is made for the audience to respond to preaching, depending on the subject of the preaching. Pentecostal preaching also emphasises the spiritual aspect of people more than their social aspect. Therefore, it can be concluded that the interviewees corroborated Mashau's (2013:5) assertion, that central to Pentecostal preaching is the call to repent, believe and accept Christ as a personal Saviour. However, the interviewees did not mention the negative aspects of Pentecostal preaching, for example, Pentecostal preaching does not emphasise the historical-critical textual exegesis.

#### **6.2.4 Understanding the concept of Christology**

All the interviewees mentioned that Christology is about the life and ministry of Jesus. However, they did not go into the distinction between the historical Jesus and Jesus as the Messiah. Regarding the importance of Christology, the interviewees affirmed its importance in preaching by saying that Christ must be central to all preaching and all activities of church worship. This study's view is that at some points, the interviewees used Christology and Christ-centeredness in all church activities interchangeably. Regarding the expression of Christology in the Western Reef, while only one said Christology was fairly expressed in Western Reef Region, another interviewee said it was expressed mostly in evangelistic campaigns. The other three categorically said it was not sufficiently expressed in preaching.

On the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology, all interviewees agreed that there was a strong relationship. They based their assertion on various points such as the Trinity of the Godhead, the fact that Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit and that he promised to send the Holy Spirit after he departed from the earth.

Sermons also showed that there was a reference to Jesus Christ, especially on days like Christmas and Resurrection Sunday. However, this cannot be said to be the norm because only ten sermons were analysed and sermons from social media platforms were based on the researcher's subjective choice.

In conclusion, it can be said that while the interviewees understood Christology fairly well, sometimes its understanding meant Christ-centeredness in all activities of church

worship. It can also be said that in general, the interviewees feel that Christology is not sufficiently expressed in the preaching of the Western Reef Region.

## **6.2.5 Factors affecting preaching in the Western Reef**

### **Lack of training for ministers**

Although lack of training in ministry in general, and preaching in particular, was not immediately evident in the sermons analysed, all interviewees mentioned it as the main reason why preaching was at the unsatisfactory level currently experienced in their region. Two interviewees attributed this to the origin and tradition of Pentecostalism wherein there is overdependence on the Holy Spirit at the expense of theological training.

Furthermore, one interviewee bemoaned that the AOG (BTG) leadership has not taken this matter as seriously as in some Pentecostal churches, wherein even being a leader of a church department such as Sunday school, would need prior training. Given the extent to which this matter was lamented by interviewees, this study can conclude that in truth, the lack of theological training for ministers is a matter that needs urgent attention in the Western Reef.

### **Effects of the cultural context of the congregation**

As Kim (2017:3-2017) mentions that cultural intelligence is a requirement, if preaching is to be seen as a bridge-building exercise between the world of the Bible and the world of the twenty-first century, this was also alluded to by the interviewees. This is even more needful since ministers in the AOG (BTG) are from time to time transferred from one place to another, sometimes of a different culture. While this has not created many problems, it is evident that language and some cultural practices do affect preaching. From what is currently happening, it can be concluded that while cultural contexts affect preaching, it has not created many problems in the AOG (BTG). As such, the practice of transferring ministers from one locality to another of a different cultural context is an acceptable norm.

### **6.2.6 State of preaching in the Western Reef Region**

The general view of the interviewees is that preaching in the Western Reef is not at a satisfactory level. Some areas of preaching such as evangelism are commended for consistently preaching Christ. However, one interviewee felt that this is also necessary for everyday preaching. This research notes that in the case of the sermons analysed, there was a fairly good representation of who Jesus is, and what he did. Nevertheless, this study posits that while Christ-centeredness is important in preaching, it should not be forced into every sermon.

### **6.2.7 Improving preaching in the Western Reef**

It can be concluded from what the interviewees said that following the fact that lack of ministerial training is the main cause of the state of preaching in the Western Reef, the solution then is that concerted efforts should be made by the AOG (BTG), to train ministers. This could take the form of pre-ministerial training for prospective pastors, as well as workshops for pastors who are already in the ministry. Given that sometimes pastors who are in the ministry lack funds for theological training, one interviewee suggested that the AOG (BTG) leadership should make funds available for this venture. In addition, one proposal was that the church has to deliberately present and show role models of theological training to the rest of the pastorate and the church, to act as a motivation for others. For this study, the above suggestions seem to be plausible and viable.

## **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Theological training of prospective ministers**

Since most of the blame for the current situation regarding preaching and sufficiency of Christological expression is said to emanate from the lack of theological training of pastors, this study recommends that all possible avenues be explored to ensure that pastors receive theological training, especially before they start the ministry. In addition, continuous training should be conducted for pastors who are already in the ministry.



## **Emphasis on theological training by the church**

One of the reasons for having untrained pastors is that the church does not put enough emphasis on the theological training of pastors. This study recommends that the encouragement of pastors to pursue theological training be a matter of priority in the pastors' fellowship meetings.

### **6.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

- In this study, only ten sermons were analysed. Given that the results of a qualitative study such as this one cannot be generalised, it is necessary that a mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) study be conducted, to include responses to questionnaires from a wide range of stakeholders. The study may also include observation of more live sermons being preached in the whole Region of the Western Reef. In addition, more participants can be involved through focus group interviews. Furthermore, this study could be replicated in other regions of the AOG (BTG), to ascertain the validity and trustworthiness of the findings.
- One of the findings of this study is that the lack of training of pastors affected their preaching. This study, therefore, recommends that another study be undertaken in which the impact of the lack of theological training of pastors in the AOG (BTG) could be investigated.
- In this study, some sermons were from social media platforms because of the onset of Covid-19. Hence, congregational participation and how the preacher involved the congregation in preaching were not fully observed. This study, therefore, proposes that another study be conducted, wherein more live preaching will be observed in several churches, focusing on the aforementioned aspects.

### **6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Since this study is cross-sectional and dealt with only ten preachers in the Western Reef Region, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to the whole Western Reef Region or the whole of the AOG (BTG).

The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews with preachers was not piloted first. This may raise concerns regarding its appropriateness in the study. This is partly because of insufficient time for the research and the onset of Covid-19.

While this study made efforts to ensure that the sampling of interviewees was random, this sampling was also influenced by the interviewees' ability to communicate in English. Therefore, this sample might not be representative of all the pastors in the Western Reef churches.

Since English is not the language of communication for most of the interviewees, this might have affected the way they articulated their views and hence the findings of the study.

## **6.6 SUMMARY**

This is an empirical study of Pentecostal preaching and Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region in the AOG (BTG). It is a qualitative study conducted by analysing ten sermons by different preachers from the aforesaid region. In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with five of the preachers whose sermons were analysed.

The theoretical framework of the study was Richard Osmer's four core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation, which are the Descriptive task, the Interpretive task, the Normative task and the Pragmatic task. These four core tasks proved to be an appropriate and useful framework for this study. Furthermore, this study discussed Pentecostalism, preaching and Christology in different chapters, with Pentecostalism being the context of preaching and Christology in the Western Reef Region.

Chapter 2, on Pentecostalism, discussed the definition, origin and development of Pentecostalism, African Pentecostalism, including Pentecostalism in South Africa as well as biases in Pentecostal history. Furthermore, the chapter included a discussion on the Pentecostal worldview and doctrinal tenets, rituals and practices of the Pentecostal belief. Last, the chapter discussed the Pentecostal hermeneutic, the role of women in Pentecostal worship, the economic message of Pentecostals and the prosperity gospel, as well as the strengths of, and challenges facing Pentecostalism.

Chapter 3 was on preaching. It dealt with various definitions of preaching, and important elements of preaching, namely, the preacher, the sermon, the congregation and the Scripture. In addition, the chapter entailed Pentecostal preaching, preaching in the African context, as well as the preaching of Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu.

Chapter 4 dealt with Christology, as one of the fundamental elements of Pentecostal theology. Pertinent to the discussion on Christology, were its definition, views on the origins of Jesus as Messiah, Christological controversies, and the development of Christology from the New Testament, Patristic, Medieval and Reformation periods and beyond. Furthermore, the chapter included Pentecostal Christology, African Christology, Christocentricity as an exegetical approach to the Old Testament as well as preaching Christ from the Old Testament by New Testament writers.

Data from the semi-structured interviews were presented in narrative form and the 'emic' view of the interviewees. Data analysis was done through Atlas.ti. In addition, the thematic structure of the interview schedule was adopted for analysis of semi-structured interviews.

The study revealed that the interviewees had a fair understanding of the concepts of Pentecostalism, preaching and Christology. However, it seemed as if the concept of Christology and Christ-centeredness in worship, were used interchangeably. In addition, from what the interviewees stated, preaching in the Western Reef region is not at the required level and neither is Christology finding sufficient expression in preaching. This state of preaching in the region was mainly attributable to the lack of theological training for ministers. All interviewees mentioned this. It, therefore, follows that to improve preaching in the Western Reef, prospective ministers have to be trained before they start the ministry. In addition, workshops should be conducted for those who are already in the ministry.

## 7. LIST OF SOURCES

- Alvarado, J.E., 2012, Worship in the Spirit: 'Pentecostal perspectives on liturgical theology and praxis', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21, 135–151.
- Ambesange P.V., 2016, 'Postcolonialism: Edward Said & Gayatri Spivak', *Research Journal of Recent Sciences* 5(8), 47-50.
- Ambrose, L.M., 2012, 'Thinking through the methodological and theoretical quandaries of gender and Canadian Pentecostal history', *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* 3, 70-88.
- Anderson, A., 2004a, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Anderson, A., 2004b, 'The origins of Pentecostalism and its global spread in the early twentieth century', Lecture for the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 5 October 2004, Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham.
- Anderson, A., 2013, 'Global Pentecostalism, Charismatic Movements and Independent Churches. Christianity shifting southwards: Historical overview', Lecture for the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland, 18 November 2013.
- Appiah-Kubi, K., 1987, Christology, in J. Parratt (ed.), *A reader in African Christian theology*, pp. 69-81, SPCK, London.
- Asamoah-Gyadu, J.K., 2013, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African context*, Regnum Books, Eugene.
- Augustine, 2002, The uses of rhetoric, in Lischer, R (ed.), *The company of preachers: Wisdom on preaching. Augustine to the present*. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids.
- Babbie, E., 2005, *The basics of social research*, Thompson Wadsworth, Belmont.
- Babbie, E & Mouton, J., 2001, *The practice of social research*, Oxford, New York.
- Baker, T.L., 1988, *Doing social research*, McGraw-Hill, San Francisco.

Ballard, P., 2000, 'Can theology be practical?', in Willows, D. & Swinton, J (eds.), *Spiritual dimensions of pastoral care: Practical theology in a multidisciplinary context*, pp. 36-50, Jessica Kingsley, London.

Banda, C., 2005, 'The sufficiency of Christ in Africa: A Christological challenge from African traditional religions', MTh dissertation, Faculty of Theology, University of South Africa.

Barnard, M., Cilliers, J.H. & Wepener, C.J., 2014, 'Worship in the network culture: Liturgical ritual studies – fields and methods, concepts and metaphors', *Liturgia Condenda*, Peeters Pers, Leuven.

Basden, P., 1999, *The worship maze: Finding a style to fit your church*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove.

Bauckham, R.J., 2004, 'Christology', in Green J.B., Brown, J.K. & Perrin, N. (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, pp. 125-133, Intervarsity Press, Nottingham.

Beeley, C.A., 2011, 'The early Christological controversy: Apollinarius, Diodore, and Gregory Nazianzen', *Vigiliae Christianae* 6, 376-407.

Bickman, L. & Rog, D.J., 2009, 'Applied research design: A practical approach', in Bickman, L. & Rog, D.J. (eds.), *The Sage handbook of social research methods*, pp. 3-43, Sage, California.

Bird, M.F., 2012, *Jesus is the Christ: The messianic testimony of the gospels*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove.

Bless, C. & Higson-Smith, C., 2000, *Fundamentals of social research methods*, Juta, Cape Town.

Bolarinwa, J.A. n.d., African Pentecostalism and development of Africa and Diaspora, A paper presented at the International Conference on African Pentecostalism.

Bonhoeffer, D., 2002, 'The proclaimed word', in Lischer, R (ed.), *The company of preachers: Wisdom on preaching. Augustine to the present*. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids.

Bos, R., 2008, *We have heard that God is with you: Preaching the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

Brodie, R., 2011, *The anointing or theological training? A Pentecostal dilemma*. South African Theological Seminary.

Brown, R.E., 1994, *An introduction to New Testament Christology*, Paulist Press, New York.

Browning, D.S., 1983, *Religious ethics and pastoral care*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.

Browning, D.S., 1991, *A fundamental PT: Descriptive and strategic proposals*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

Brueggemann, W., 1989, *Finally comes the poet: Daring speech for proclamation*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

Brueggemann, W., 2005, 'Preaching as reimagination', in Day, D., Astley, J. & Francis, L.J. (eds.), *A reader on preaching: Making connections*, pp. 17-29, Ashgate, Burlington.

Bruner, F.D., 1980, *A theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament witness*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

Brunner, E., 1952, *Dogmatics: Vol. 2. The Christian doctrine of creation and redemption*. (O. Wyon, trans.), Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

Bujo, B., 1992, *African theology in its social context*, Orbis Books, New York.

Bultmann, R., 1961, 'New Testament and theology', in Bartish, H. (ed.), *Kerygma and myth*, pp. 116-122, Harper and Row, New York.

Burchardt, M., 2018, 'Saved from hegemonic masculinity? Charismatic Christianity and men's responsabilization in South Africa', *Current Sociology* 66(1), 110 – 127.

Buttrick, D., 1994, *A captive voice: The liberation of preaching*. John Knox Press, Louisville.

Buttrick, D., 2015, Foreword, in Jacobsen, D.S. (ed.), *Homiletical theology. Preaching as doing theology: The promise of homiletical theology Vol 1*, Cascade Books, Eugene.

Cahalan, K.A., 2005, *Three approaches to Practical Theology, theological education, and the church's ministry*. College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University.

Cahalan, K.A, Hess, C.L. & Miller MacLemore, M., 2008, 'Teaching Practical Theology: Introducing six perspectives', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 12, 35-87.

Callan, T., 2001, 'The Christology of the second letter of Peter', *Biblica* 82(2), Peeters Publishers, 253-263.

Chetty, I.G., 2009, 'Towards a postcolonial Pentecostal historiography: Ramblings from the south', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 35(2), 337-351.

Chupungco, A., 1992, *Liturgical inculturation, sacramentals, religiosity and catechesis*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville.

Craddock, F.B., 2005, 'From exegesis to sermon: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6', in Day, D., Astley, J. & Francis, L.J. (eds.), *A reader in preaching: Exploration in practical, pastoral and empirical theology*, pp. 85-92, Ashgate, Burlington.

Dargan, E.C., 1905, *A history of preaching Vol 1: From the apostolic fathers to the great reformers AD 70-1572*, Hodder & Stoughton, New York.

Dargan, E.C., 1912, *A history of preaching Vol 2: From the close of the Reformation period to the end of the nineteenth century (1572-1900)*, Hodder & Stoughton, New York.

Dargan, E.C., 1970, *A history of preaching Vol 2: From the close of the Reformation period to the end of the nineteenth century (1572-1900)*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids.

Del Colle, R., 1993, Spirit-Christology: Dogmatic Foundations for Pentecostal Charismatic spirituality, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. Vol 3, 91–112.



De Lacey, D.R., 1987, Image and incarnation in Pauline Christology - a search for origins. *Tyndale Bulletin* 30, 3-28.

Dunn, J.D.G., 1989, *Christology in the making: A New Testament inquiry into the origins of the doctrine of the incarnation (2nd ed.)*, SCM Press, London.

Dykstra, R.C., 2001, *Discovering a sermon: Personal pastoral preaching*, Chalice Press, St Louis.

Elliot, M.B., 2000, *Creative styles of preaching*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.

Erickson, M.J., 1991, *The Word became flesh*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids.

Eslinger, R.L., 2002, *The web of preaching: New options in homiletic method*, Abingdon Press, Nashville.

Farley, E., 2005, 'Preaching the Bible and preaching the gospel', in Day, D., Astley, J. & Francis, L.J. (eds.), *A reader in preaching: Exploration in practical, pastoral and empirical theology*, pp. 65-74, Ashgate, Burlington.

Fishbeck, N.B., 2012, 'The High-Priestly Christology of the Letter to the Hebrews: A fusion of late second temple theology and early Christian tradition', MA dissertation, Faculty of the School of Theology, University of the South.

Fleming, D. (ed.), 2004, 'Hebrews, Letter to the', in *Bridgeway Bible Dictionary: An A to Z of biblical information for the people of today's world*, Bridgeway Publications, Brisbane, pp. 181-182.

Fleming, D. (ed.), 2004, 'Preaching', in *Bridgeway Bible Dictionary: An A to Z of biblical information for the people of today's world*, Bridgeway Publications, Brisbane, pp. 373.

Florence, A.C., 2008, 'The preaching imagination', in Long, T.G. & Tisdale, L.T. (eds.), *Teaching preaching as a Christian practice*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.

Frahm-Arp, M., 2018, Pentecostalism, politics, and prosperity in South Africa, *Religions*, 9, 298; doi:10.3390/rel9100298.

Francis, L.J., 2005, 'Psychological types and biblical hermeneutics: SIFT method of preaching', in Day, D., Astley, J. & Francis, L.J. (eds.), *A reader in preaching: Exploration in practical, pastoral and empirical theology*, pp. 75-82, Ashgate, Burlington.

Freeman, D., 2016, 'Pentecostalism and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa', *LSE Research Online*.

Gabaitse, R.M., 2015, 'Pentecostal hermeneutics and the marginalisation of women', *Scriptura*, 114, 1-12.

Gathogo, J., 2015, 'Reconstructive hermeneutics in African Christology', *HTS Theological studies* 71(3), Art. #2660, 8 pages. [http:// dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2660](http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2660).

Gibbs G.R., 2011, *Analyzing qualitative data*, Sage Publications, London.

Gieschen, C.A., 2004, 'The real presence of the Son before Christ: Revisiting an old approach to Old Testament Christology', *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 68 (2), 105 -126.

Goldsworthy, G., 2000, *Preaching the whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The application of biblical theology to expository preaching*, William B. Eerdmans, Cambridge.

Gooren, H., 2004, 'An introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity', *Ars Disputandi*, 4:1, 206-209, DOI: 10.1080/15665399.2004.10819846.

Greidanus, S., 1999, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A contemporary hermeneutical method*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

Gundry, R.H., 1994, *A survey of the New Testament*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids.

Habets, M., 2003, 'Spirit Christology: Seeing in stereo', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11(2), 199-234.

Hahne H.A., 2012, 'How the Apostle Peter preached Christ from the Old Testament:

Christological exegesis in the book of Acts', Presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, Far West Region Annual Meeting, April 20, 2012. Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Scottsdale, Arizona.

Hall, D.J., 1990, *The steward: A biblical symbol come of age*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

Heitink, G., 1999, *Practical theology, history, theory, action domains*, William B. Eerdmans, Michigan.

Henry, C.F.H., 1992, 'The identity of Jesus of Nazareth', *Criswell Theological Review*. 6 (1), 91-130.

Hogan, L.L. & Reid, R., 1999, *Connecting congregations: Rhetoric and the art of preaching*, Abingdon Press, Nashville.

Holladay, C.R., 2005, *A critical introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the message and meaning of Jesus Christ*, Abingdon Press, Nashville.

House, S.D., 2006, 'Pentecostal contributions to contemporary Christological thought: A synthesis with ecumenical views', MTh dissertation, Faculty of Theology, University of South Africa.

Hughes, R.H., 2004, *Pentecostal preaching*. Second edition. Pathway, Cleveland.

Hultgren, A.J., 1988, *New Testament Christology: A critical assessment and annotated bibliography*, Greenwood Press, New York.

Hunsinger, D., 1995, *Theology & pastoral counselling: A new interdisciplinary approach*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

Hussey, I., 2015, 'The other side of the pulpit: Listener's experiences of helpful preaching', *ResearchGate*. DOI: 10.15695/hmltc.v39i2.4026.

Hwang, J., 2004, 'Sermon forms as a dimension of communication in the current worship context in the South Korean churches', PhD thesis, Dept. of Practical of Theology, University of Pretoria.

Irons, C.L., 2015, 'A trinitarian view: Jesus, the divine Son of God', in *The Son of God: The three views of the identity of Jesus*, pp, 3-62, Wipf & Stock, Eugene.

Jacobsen, D.G., 2006, *A reader in Pentecostal theology: Voices from the first generation*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Jacobsen D.S., 2015, 'Background to homiletical theology', in Jacobsen, D.S. (ed.), *Homiletical theology- Preaching as doing theology: The promise of homiletical theology*, Vol 1, Cascade Books, Eugene.

Johnson, P.W.T., 2015, *The mission of preaching: Equipping the community for faithful witness*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove.

Johnson, T.D., 2014, *The preacher as a liturgical artist: Metaphor, identity and the vicarious humanity of Christ*, Cascade Books, Eugene.

Jones, G., 1999, *Christian theology: A brief introduction*, Polity, Cambridge.

Juzwik, M.M., 2014, 'American evangelical biblicism as literate practice: A critical review', *Reading Research Quarterly*, 49 (3). Doi: 10.1002/rrq.72), 335–349.

Karkkainen, V.M., 2007, *The Trinity: Global perspectives*, Westminster John Knox Press, London.

Karkkainen, V.M., 2013, *Christ and reconciliation*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

Kaunda, C., 2015, 'Towards Pentecopolitanism: New African Pentecostalism and social cohesion in South Africa', *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 15(3), 112-134.

Kawulich, B.B., 2005, 'Participant observation as a data collection method', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(2), Article 43.

Kgatile, M.S., 2017, 'The unusual practices within some Neo-Pentecostal churches in South Africa: Reflections and recommendation', *HTS Theological Studies* 73(3), a4656. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4656>.

Kgatle, M.S. & Mofokeng, T.R., 2019, 'Towards a decolonial hermeneutic of experience in African Pentecostal Christianity: A South African perspective', *HTS Theological Studies* 75(4), a5473. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i4.5473>.

Kim, M.D., 2017, *Preaching with cultural intelligence: Understanding the people who hear our sermons*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids.

Klingorová, K & Havlíček, T., 2015, 'Religion and gender inequality: The status of women in the societies of world religions', *Moravian Geographical Reports* 2/2015, 23, 2-11.

Kunhiyop, S.W., 2012, *African Christian theology*, Zondervan, Michigan.

Kurewa, J.W.Z., 2000, *Preaching & cultural identity: Proclaiming the gospel in Africa*, Abingdon Press, Nashville.

Lee, S-H., 2004, *Preaching for the upbuilding of the church in transition*, PhD thesis, Dept. of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria.

Lephoko, D.S.B., 2005, *The mission of Nicholas B H Bhengu in a divided and polarised society: An analysis of the life, work and contribution to mission in Southern Africa of an important 20<sup>th</sup>-century pioneer*. MA dissertation, Dept. of Science of Religion and Missiology, University of Pretoria.

Lephoko, D.S.B., 2010, 'Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu's lasting legacy: A study of the life and work of one of Africa's greatest pioneers', PhD thesis, Dept. of Science of Religion and Missiology, University of Pretoria.

Lephoko, D.S.B., 2018, 'Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu's lasting legacy: World's best black soul crusader', *HTS Religion & Society Series* Vol 4. I-330, AOSIS, Cape Town.

Long, T.G., 2005a, *The witness of preaching, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Westminster John Knox, Louisville.

Long, T.G., 2005b, 'The distance we have travelled: Changing trends in preaching', in Day, D., Astley, J. & Francis, L.J. (eds.), *A reader in preaching: Exploration in practical, pastoral and empirical theology*, pp.11-16, Ashgate, Burlington.

Long, T.G., 2005c, 'The use of Scripture in contemporary preaching', in Day, D., Astley, J. & Francis, L.J. (eds.), *A reader in preaching: Exploration in practical, pastoral and empirical theology*, pp. 34-42, Ashgate, Burlington.

Long, T.G., 2008, 'The new focus for teaching preaching', in Long, T.G. & Tisdale, L.T. (eds.), *Teaching preaching as a Christian practice*, pp. 3-17, Ashgate, Burlington.

Louw, D.J., 2016, 'Preaching as art (imaging the unseen) and art as homiletics (verbalising the unseen): Towards the aesthetics of iconic thinking and poetic communication in homiletics', *HTS Theological Studies* 72(2), a3826. <http://dx.doi.Org/10.4102/hts.v72i2.3826>.

Ludlow, M., 2008, 'Suffering servant or king of glory? Christological readings of the Old Testament in the patristic era', in Lincoln, A.T. & Paddison, A. (eds.), *Christology and Scripture: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, T&T Clark, New York.

Lugo, L., 2007, 'Spirit and power: A 10-country survey of Pentecostals', Report produced by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, October 2006, Pew Research Centre. Washington D.C.

Lumbe, J.M.K., 2008, 'Origins and growth of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal church movements in Zambia between 1989-2000', MTh dissertation, Dept. of Missiology, University of South Africa.

Ma, J.C. & Ma, W., 2010, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic missiology*, Regnum Books International, Oxford.

MacDonald, M.Y., 2006, 'Women in early Christianity: The challenge to New Testament theology', in Rowland, C. & Tuckett, C. (eds.), *The nature of the New Testament theology*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

Macchia, F.D., 1999, 'The struggle for global witness: Shifting paradigms in Pentecostal theology', in Dempster, M.W., Klaus, B.D. & Petersen, D. (eds.), *The globalization of Pentecostalism: A religion made to travel*, pp. 8-29, Regnum Books, Carlisle.

Magezi, C. & Igba, J.T., 2018, 'African theology and African Christology: Difficulty and complexity in contemporary definitions and methodological frameworks', *HTS Theological Studies* 74(1), 4590. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4590>.

Malmstrom, H., 2014, 'Engaging the congregation: The place of metadiscourse in contemporary preaching', *Applied Linguistics*, 1–23, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Mayrargue, C., 2008, *The paradoxes of Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Ifri-Bruxelles, Bruxelles.

Mashau, T.D., 2013, 'Ministering effectively in the context of Pentecostalism in Africa: A reformed missional reflection', *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 47(1), Art. #84, 8 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v47i1.84>.

Mashau T.D. & Kgatle, M.S., 2019, 'Prosperity gospel and the culture of greed in post-colonial Africa: Constructing an alternative African Christian theology of ubuntu', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 40(1), a1901. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v40i1.1901>.

Matera, F.J., 1999, *New Testament Christology*. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.

Matera, F.J., 2006, 'Christ in the theologies of Paul and John: A study in the diverse unity of New Testament theology', *HTS Theological Studies* 67, 237-256.

Mathewson, S.D., 2014, 'Prophetic preaching from Old Testament narrative texts', in Stackhouse, I. & Crisp, O.D. (eds.), *Text message: The centrality of Scripture in preaching*, Lutterworth Press, Cambridge.

May, T., 1993, *Social research: Issues, methods and process*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Maxwell, J.A., 2009, 'Designing a qualitative study', in Bickman, L. & Rog, D.J. (eds.), *The Sage handbook of social research methods*, pp. 214-253, Sage, California.

Mbamalu, W.O., 2002, 'The impact of the church in community development: A focus on the doctrinal framework of the Assemblies of God churches in Pietermaritzburg', MTh dissertation, Dept. of Theology and Development, University of Natal.



Mbe, A.R., 2002, 'New Pentecostalism in the wake of the economic crisis in Cameroon', *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11(3), 359-376.

Mbiti, J.S., 1969, *African religions and philosophy*, Heinemann, London.

Mbiti, J.S., 1972, 'Some African concepts of Christology', in Vincedom G.F. (ed.), *Christ and the younger churches*, SPCK, London.

McMahon, C., 2013, *Understanding Jesus: Christology from Emmaus to today*, Anselm Academic, Winona.

McPherson, A.S. & Cox, R.L. (comp.), 1969, *The Foursquare gospel*, Foursquare Publications, Los Angeles.

Mercer, J.N., 2017, 'Interdisciplinarity as a practical theological conundrum', in Mercer, J.N. & Miller-MacLemore, B.J. (eds.), *Conundrums in Practical Theology*, pp. 163-189, viewed on 19 July 2021 from [http://doi.org/10.1163/9789004324244\\_009](http://doi.org/10.1163/9789004324244_009).

Michie, D.G., 2004, 'A Practical Theology study of contextualised preaching in Australia', PhD thesis, Dept. of Practical Theology, University of South Africa.

Migwi, J.M., 2016, 'The place of women in selected African Pentecostal churches in Limuru Sub-County, Kenya', MA dissertation, Dept. of Religious Studies, Kenyatta University.

Mikolaski S.J., 1974, 'Arianism', in Douglas, J. D. (ed.), *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 67.

Mogoane, M.L., 2012, 'An evaluation of the benefits of life skills training as a preventive strategy for HIV and AIDS for secondary school learners (Grade 9) in the Moretele district of Mpumalanga', MA dissertation, Dept. of Social Sciences, University of South Africa.

Mogoane, M.L., 2018, 'The role and impact of women in worship, in the Pentecostal churches of the Germiston District of Gauteng: A ritual-liturgical exploration', MTh dissertation, Dept. of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria.

Moore, R.D., 2004, 'Church' in Brand, C., Draper, C. & England, A. (eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, pp. 295-297.

Mueller, E., 2010, 'Christological concepts in the Book of Revelation—Part 1: Jesus in the apocalypse', *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 21/1-2, 276-305.

Müller, M., 1999, 'The theological interpretation of the figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: Some principal features in Matthean Christology', *New Testament Studies*, (45. årg.), 157-173.

Nel, M., 2017, 'Re-enactment leading to transformation: A critical assessment of the distinctives of Pentecostal preaching', *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 3(1), 285–307.

Neuman, W.L., 2012, *Basics of social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, Pearson Education, New York.

Nhiwatiwa, E.K., 2012, *Preaching in the African context: How we preach*, Discipleship Resources International, Tygerberg.

Nyamiti, C., 1984, *Christ as our ancestor*, Mambo Press, Gweru.

Nyamiti, C., 1994, 'Contemporary African Christologies: Assessment and practical suggestions', in Gibellini, R. (ed.), *Paths of African theology*, pp. 62-77, Orbis Books, New York.

O'Collins, G., 1977, *What are they saying about Jesus? A report on recent theological speculations about Jesus Christ and its implications for Christian faith*, Paulist Press, New York.

O'Collins, G., 2013, 'Christology', in Meister, C. & Beilby, J. (eds.), *The Routledge companion to modern Christian thought*, pp. 412-422, Routledge, New York.

Oduyoye, M.A., 1995, *Daughters of Anowa: African women and patriarchy*, Orbis Books, New York.

Onica, P., 1996, 'The Council of Constantinople', *Milestones*, 45-46.

Osmer, R.R., 2008, *Practical Theology: An introduction*, William B. Eerdmans, Cambridge.

Osmer, R.R., 2011, 'Practical theology: A current international perspective', *HTS Theological Studies* 67(2), #Art. 1058, 7 pages. [http:// dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i2.1058](http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i2.1058).

Panikkar, R., 1964, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London.

Pannenberg, W., 1968, *Jesus – God and Man*, SCM Press, London.

Peppler, C., n.d., Homiletics - an introductory overview, viewed on 20 June 2021 from <http://www.academia.edu/11703>.

Pieterse, H.J.C., 1987, *Communicative preaching*, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Pieterse, H.J.C., 2001, *Preaching in the context of poverty*, Unisa Press, Pretoria.

Pieterse, H.J.C., 2010, 'Metatheoretical decisions for the Grounded Theory research of sermons on poverty and to the poor as listeners', <http://ngtt.journals.ac.za> Part 51 Number 3 & 4.

Pieterse, H.J.C., 2017, 'Scientific-theoretical research approach to Practical Theology in South Africa: A contemporary overview', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(4), a4483. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4483>.

Platinga, R.J., Thompson, T.R. & Lundberg M.D., 2010, *An introduction to Christian theology*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Pleizier, T.T.J., 2010, *Religious involvement in hearing sermons: A Grounded Theory study in empirical theology and homiletics*, Eburon Academic Publishers, Delft.

Prasad, A., 2002, 'The contest over meaning: Hermeneutics as an interpretive methodology for understanding texts', *Organizational Research Methods* 5(1), 12-33.

Pui-lan, K., 2012, 'Postcolonial preaching in intercultural contexts', Episcopal Divinity School, 8-21.

Quayesi-Amakye, J., 2016, 'Pentecostalism as the African realisation of the gospel', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 42(3), 71–84.

Rahner, K., 1978, *Foundations of Christian faith: An introduction to the idea of Christianity* (Translated by WV Dych), Darton, Longman & Todd, London.

Resane, K.T., 2018, 'Pentecostals and apartheid: Has the wheel turned around since 1994?' *In die Skriflig* 52(1), a2259. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v52i1.2324>.

Robinson, D.W., 2004, 'Christology', in Brand., C, Draper, C. & England, A. (eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, pp. 284-288.

Robinson, H., 2001, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and delivery of expository messages*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids.

Root, A., 2014, *Christopraxis: A PT of the cross*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

Schillebeeckx, E., 2014 [1979], 'The collected works of Edward Schillebeeckx, Vol 6. Jesus: An experiment', in Schoof, TM., Sterkens, C., Borgman, E. & Schreiter, R.J. (eds.), *Christology*, Bloomsbury, London.

Schweitzer, A., 1911, *The quest of the historical Jesus: A critical study of its progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (Translated by W. Montgomery), 2nd English edition, Adam and Charles Black, London. (2014 Ebook 45422).

Scott, H.R., 2017, 'Praying, believing and being church: A ritual-liturgical exploration', PhD thesis, Dept. of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria.

Sewapa, T.M., 2016, 'The church historical analyses on the origins of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and other African Pentecostal type of churches in South Africa (A Zionist and Pentecostal study)', Postgraduate Diploma research assignment paper, University of Stellenbosch.

Singleton, S., 1998, "Worthy is the Lamb: The Christology of Revelation 5", *DeeperStudy.com*, viewed 16 April 2020, from <http://www.DeeperStudy.com>.

Sloan R.B., 1986, 'The Christology of James', *Criswell Theological Review* 1(1), 3-29.

Smith, S.W., 2008, 'Christology of preaching', *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 50(2),134-145.

Stackhouse, I., 2014, 'The text has more than enough thoughts: Bonhoeffer's lectures on preaching', in Stackhouse, I. & Crisp, O.D. (eds.), *Text message: The centrality of Scripture in preaching*, The Lutterworth Press, Cambridge.

Stackhouse, I., 2014, 'Living with the text', in Stackhouse, I. & Crisp, O.D. (eds.), *Text message: The centrality of Scripture in preaching*, The Lutterworth Press, Cambridge.

Stevenson, P.K., 2005, 'Preaching and narrative', in Day, D., Astley, J. & Francis, L.J. (eds.), *A reader on preaching: Making connections*, pp. 101-106, Ashgate, Burlington.

Steyn, T.H. & Masango, M.J., 2011, 'The theology and praxis of Practical Theology in the context of the Faculty of Theology', *HTS Theological Studies* 67(2), Art. #956, 7 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i2.956>.

Stinton, D., 2000, Jesus of Africa: 'Voices of contemporary African Christology', in Merrigan, T. & Haers, J. (eds.), *The Myriad Christ*, Leuven University Press, Leuven.

Stinton, D.B., 2006, *Jesus of Africa: Voices of contemporary African Christology*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll.

Stott J.R.W., 1961, *The preacher's portrait*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

Straub, J.P., 2016, The Pentecostalizing of global Christianity and the challenge for cessationism, *DBSJ*, 21, 207–234.

Struwig, F.W. & Stead, G.B., 2001, *Planning, designing and reporting research*, Pearson Education, Cape Town.

Strydom, H., 2002, 'Ethical aspects of research in the Social Sciences and human service professions', in De Vos, A.S. (ed.), *Research at grassroots for Social Sciences and human service professions*, pp. 62-76, Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria.

Suarsana, Y., 2014, What is Pentecostalism? Some historiographical considerations. A discussion paper submitted to the workshop "Studying Pentecostalism in a Transcultural Perspective" (3–5 April 2014), at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies Cluster of Excellence, Asia and Europe in a Global Context at Heidelberg University.

- Swears, T.R., 2000, *Preaching to the head and heart*, Abingdon Press, Nashville.
- Tesch, R., 1990, *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*, Routledge Falmer, London.
- Tisdale, L.T., 2008, 'Exegeting the congregation', in Long, T.G. & Tisdale, L.T. (eds.), *Teaching preaching as a Christian practice*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.
- Tisdale, L.T., 2010, *Prophetic preaching: A pastoral approach*. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.
- Tsiane, M.M.P., 2013, 'Conceptualising the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ in the African Pentecostal Independent Churches: A Bethesda Apostolic Faith Mission Church case study', MA dissertation, Dept. of Missiology, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.
- University of Pretoria. n.d. Introduction to Science of Religion, Tutorial guide GSW 871. Pretoria.
- Vandersluys, M., 2009, 'Personality and terminology: The Nestorian controversy', MA dissertation, Briercrest Seminary.
- Van Eck, E. & Kok, K., 2011, 'Hermeneutics', *Encyclopedia of the New Testament and the Mediterranean socio-cultural environment*, Textbook for BYA 120, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
- Vos, C.J.A., 2007, 'Preaching as a language of hope', in Vos, C.J.A., Hogan, L.L. & Cilliers, J.H. (eds.), *Preaching as a language of hope*, pp. 11-28, Protea Book House, Pretoria.
- Watson, D.F., 2010, 'Christology', in Evans, C.A. (ed.), *The Routledge encyclopaedia of the historical Jesus*, pp. 107-114, Routledge, New York.
- Watt, P., 1992, *From Africa's soil: The story of the Assemblies of God in Southern Africa*, Struik, Cape Town.
- Weiss, J., 1971, *Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God*, Hiers, R.H. & Holland, D.L. (eds.), Scholars Press, Chico.

Weitzman, E.A. & Miles M.B., 1995, *A software sourcebook: Computer programs for qualitative data analysis*, Sage, London.

Wells, S. & Quash, B., 2010, *Introducing Christian ethics*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden.

Wepener, C. 2014, Liturgical inculturation or liberation? A qualitative exploration of major themes in liturgical reform in South Africa, *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 70(1), Art. #2644, 8 pages.

Wepener, C.J., Dreyer, Y. & Meylahn J.A., 2017, 'The tradition of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria, in Theology at the University of Pretoria – 100 years (1917–2017): Past, present and future', Human, D.J. (ed.), *Verbum et ecclesia Supplement 2*, 133 -155.

Wepener, C. & Pieterse, H.J.C., 2018, 'Content analysis of sermons: Making use of a Grounded Theory methodology', *International Journal of Public Theology* 12, 401–415.

White, A.G., 2016, 'Pentecostal preaching as a modern epistle: A comparison of Pentecostal preaching with Paul's practice of letter writing', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 25, 123-149.

White, P., 2017, 'Decolonizing Western missionaries' mission theology and practice in Ghanaian church history: A Pentecostal approach', *In die Skriflig* 51(1), a2233. [https://doi.org/ 10.4102/ids.v51i1.2233](https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v51i1.2233).

Williams, J.R., 1988, *Renewal Theology: Vol. 1. God, the world and redemption*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids.

Yemisi, O.M. & Dada, O.M.O., 2015, 'Gender and religion: The changing status of women within religious context', *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1(3), 245-248.



## 8. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH (TO REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE)

TO: The Secretary  
Regional Council Committee  
Western Reef Region  
Johannesburg

1441 Matsipa Avenue  
Spruitview  
1425  
19 June 2019

Sirs

#### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

Greetings in Jesus' most wonderful Name. I refer to the above-mentioned matter.

I, **Motsepe Lawrence Mogoane**, (Student Number 21321532), am a student at the University of Pretoria. As part of my studies, I am expected to do a research project. The purpose of my research is to explore and analyse Pentecostal preaching and Christology of the Western Reef Region, of the Assemblies of God (Back to God).

I, therefore, request permission to conduct this research in the aforementioned churches. In this study, I will observe, and listen to 14 (fourteen) sermons to analyse them. I will also interview five congregational leaders (elder/deacon or pastor) whom I will identify, in this region. I will seek permission for access to the churches from each church leadership office, pending your permission for me to proceed with the study.

The sermons and interviews with the congregational leaders will be tape-recorded. The tape recordings and transcripts thereof will be used by the researcher and his supervisor for purposes of this research only and will be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed. For confidentiality, the identities of the churches and the participants will not be revealed.

I will appreciate your positive response in written form to forward it to the university for ethical clearance. If the RCC members would request more clarity on this issue, I will be glad to have a meeting with them.

Yours faithfully

---

M. L. Mogoane (Researcher) Cell: 082 560 9053

## APPENDIX 2: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH (TO LOCAL CHURCHES)

1441 Matsipa Avenue

Spruitview

1425

19 June 2019

To: The Elders/Deacons

\_\_\_\_\_ Assembly of God

### GERMISTON DISTRICT

Sirs

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

I, **Motsepe Lawrence Mogoane**, (Student Number 21321532), am a student at the University of Pretoria. As part of my studies, I am expected to do a research project. The purpose of my research is to explore and analyse Pentecostal preaching and Christology of the Western Reef Region, with a particular focus on the Assemblies of God (Back to God) churches.

I hereby request permission to conduct this research in your church. In this study, I will observe, and listen to one or two sermon(s) with a view of analysis thereof. The researcher may request an interview with one of your congregational leaders. The sermon(s) and/or the interviews will be tape-recorded. The tape recordings and transcripts will be used by the researcher and his supervisor for purposes of this research only and will be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed. For confidentiality, the identities of the church and/or the participants will not be revealed.

I will appreciate your positive response **in written form** to forward to the university. If the church leadership would request more clarity on this issue, I will be glad to have a meeting with them.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_

M. L. Mogoane (Researcher) Cell: 082 560 9053

## APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH (SERMON OBSERVATION /YOUTUBE SERMON ANALYSIS)



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty: Theology and Religion  
Department: Practical Theology

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

**Title Of The Study:** Pentecostal preaching and Christology: an empirical study.

**Researcher:** Motsepe Lawrence MOGOANE

**Institutional affiliation:** Pastor, Assemblies of God (Back to God)

#### Researcher contact details

Cell: 082 560 9053

Email: Imogoane@webmail.co.za

**Work address:** Spruitview Assembly of God  
1441 Matsipa Avenue  
Spruitview  
1425

---

You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research, i.e. Pentecostal preaching and Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region of Gauteng. Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document **before** the start of the study. If a child is 18 years or younger and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-18 years are also required to sign an assent form.

- **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is to explore and analyse Pentecostal preaching and Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region, particularly in the Assemblies of God (Back to God). The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request.
- **Duration of the study:** The study will be conducted for six months and its projected date of completion is 30 June 2021.
- **Research procedures:** This is a qualitative study. Theologically, this study will be viewed from Osmer's (2011) work on the current international perspective of Practical Theology. Herein, Richard R. Osmer deals with two levels of paradigms of Practical Theology, namely paradigms of Practical Theology at the level of pastoral and ecclesial practice (i.e. descriptive empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatics tasks) as mentioned by Osmer (2008); and paradigms of academic Practical Theology at the metatheoretical level of research theory-construction.

- Data will be collected through analysis of sermons and semi-structured interviews with some members of the church leadership.
- Sermons to be analysed may be part **of real services observed in the church** or sermons obtained through your permission **from YouTube**, wherein you will be preaching.
- **Your rights:** Your participation in this study is very important. Your participation may be in the form of live preaching at church or through a sermon obtained from YouTube. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences. The relevant data will be destroyed, should you choose to withdraw.
- You, as a participant, may contact the researcher at any time to clarify any issues of this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document.

**Confidentiality:** All information regarding the study will be held confidential; Pseudo names will be used to hide the identity of the participants and their organization (church). Only the researcher, his assistant and his supervisor will have access to the data of the study. All data of the research study will be held at the University of Pretoria and destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed.

#### WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

---

I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research.

I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: (Name and Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: M L MOGOANE \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT *(Only applicable if the respondent cannot write)*

---

I, the researcher, have read and have explained fully to the respondent, named \_\_\_\_\_ and his/her relatives, the letter of introduction. The respondent indicated that he/she understands that he/she will be free to withdraw at any time.

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH (INTERVIEW)



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty: Theology and Religion  
Department: Practical Theology

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

**Title Of The Study:** Pentecostal preaching and Christology: an empirical study.

**Researcher: Motsepe Lawrence MOGOANE**

**Institutional affiliation:** Pastor, Assemblies of God (Back to God)

#### **Researcher's contact details**

Cell: 082 560 9053

Email: Imogoane@webmail.co.za

**Work address:** Spruitview Assembly of God  
1441 Matsipa Avenue  
Spruitview  
1425

---

You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research, i.e. Pentecostal preaching and Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region of Gauteng. Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document **before** the start of the study. If a child is 18 years or younger and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-18 years are also required to sign an assent form.

- **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is to explore and analyse Pentecostal preaching and Christology in the churches of the Western Reef Region, particularly in the Assemblies of God (Back to God). The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request.
- **Duration of the study:** The study will be conducted for six months and its projected date of completion is 30 June 2021.
- **Research procedures:** This is a qualitative study. Theologically, this study will be viewed from Osmer's (2011) work on the current international perspective of Practical Theology. Herein, Richard R. Osmer deals with two levels of paradigms of Practical Theology, namely paradigms of Practical Theology at the level of pastoral and ecclesial practice (i.e. descriptive empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatics tasks) as mentioned by Osmer (2008); and paradigms of academic Practical Theology at the metatheoretical level of research theory-construction.

- Data will be collected through analysis of sermons and semi-structured interviews with some members of the church leadership.
- **The researcher will interview you**, based on the questions in the interview schedule, which will be given to you before the interview. The interview will last for about 1 hour.
- **Your rights:** Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences. The relevant data will be destroyed, should you choose to withdraw.
- You, as a participant, may contact the researcher at any time to clarify any issues of this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document.

**Confidentiality:** All information regarding the study will be held confidential; Pseudo names will be used to hide the identity of the participants and their organization (church). Only the researcher, his assistant and his supervisor will have access to the data of the study. All data of the research study will be held at the University of Pretoria and destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed.

### WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

---

I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research.

I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: (Name and Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: M L MOGOANE \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT *(Only applicable if the respondent cannot write)*

---

I, the researcher, have read and have explained fully to the respondent, named \_\_\_\_\_ and his/her relatives, the letter of introduction. The respondent indicated that he/she understands that he/she will be free to withdraw at any time.

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5: Letter of permission to do research (From Western Reef Regional Council Committee)

### ASSEMBLIES OF GOD (BACK TO GOD) WESTERN REEF REGIONAL COUNCIL

01 Magaliesberg Street, Winchester Hills Ext 1, Johannesburg South, 2091

P.O. Box 7883 2000, Tel: (011)333 0032/2528 Fax: (011) 333 0030

E-mail: [secretariat@aogwesternreefregion.org.za](mailto:secretariat@aogwesternreefregion.org.za)



---

28 June 2019

To Pastor LM Mogoane

#### PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN WESTERN REEF REGION GRANTED.

Warm Christian Greetings

The Regional Council Committee has granted you permission to do research in Western Reef Regional churches/Assemblies and to conduct interviews with members or pastors who will agree to do so. All Assemblies in our Region will be informed about the research work you will be doing.

The RCC wishes you successful research work.

Kind regards

Ps MM Lusunzi  
Secretary

Ps MM Motete  
Chairman



## **APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

### **1. Understanding the notion of preaching**

- a) What do you understand about the concept of preaching, in general?
- b) What are the main components of preaching and how important is each of them in the phenomenon of preaching?
- c) The preacher proclaims the word. What are the other roles of the preacher in the preaching beside the proclamation of the word?
- d) What do you think the preacher should do to effectively engage the congregation in preaching?

### **2. Pentecostalism and Pentecostal preaching**

- a) What is Pentecostalism and how does it differ from the other church traditions?
- b) What do you think are the fundamentals of Pentecostal preaching?
- c) What are the differences between Pentecostal preaching and preaching in other church traditions?
- d) How do cultural contexts of the congregation affect Pentecostal preaching?

### **3. Christology and its expressions in preaching**

- a) What do you understand about the concept of Christology
- b) Is Christology important in the Pentecostal tradition, and if so, do you think it finds sufficient expression in preaching in your church?
- c) What is the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit?

### **4. Improvement of preaching in the churches of the Western Reef Region**

- a) How would you describe the state of preaching in your region at present?
- b) What are the factors that affect preaching in your region?
- c) What would you suggest as improvements to preaching in your church/region?

**APPENDIX 7: OBSERVATION SHEET FOR SERMON PREACHING (Used in Sermons A and B only)**

**Name of Church (not actual):** ..... **Date:** .....

<b>Time in minutes</b>	<b>Activity by the preacher</b>	<b>Congregation's Participation in the activity</b>	<b>Comments</b>
0-15			
16-30			
31-45			
46-60			
61-75			

**Comments:**

.....

.....

.....

**Signed:** .....(Researcher)

